

No 479

Dec. 22nd 1911

5 Cents

WILD WEST WEEKLY.

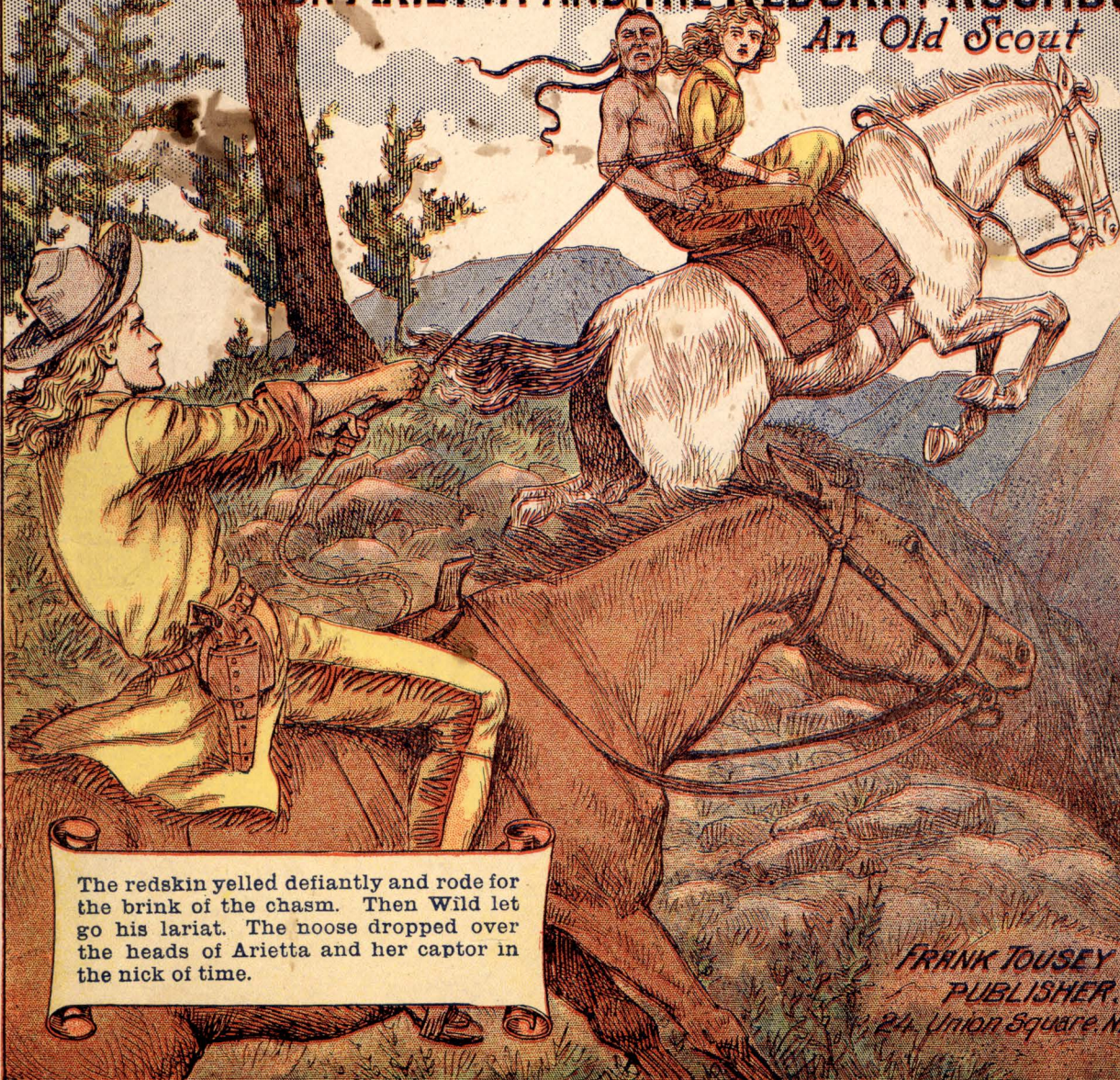
YOUNG WILD WEST CORRALLING

AND OTHER STORIES

THE CREEKS

OR ARIETTA AND THE REDSKIN ROUNDUP

An Old Scout



The redskin yelled defiantly and rode for the brink of the chasm. Then Wild let go his lariat. The noose dropped over the heads of Arietta and her captor in the nick of time.

FRANK TOUSEY
PUBLISHER

24 Union Square, NEW YORK

Frank Borden Book

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1911, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York. Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as second-class matter.

No. 479

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1911.

Price 5 Cents.

Young Wild West Corralling the Creeks

OR,

Arietta and the Redskin Round-Up

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

YOUNG WILD WEST MAKES AN ACCUSATION.

"Well, co'nel, what appears to be the trouble around here?" The speaker was Young Wild West, the well-known Boy Hero and Champion Deadshot of the West.

The question was asked of Colonel Merry, of the Nineteenth Cavalry.

The place was an army post in the upper part of Utah, not far from the Wyoming line, and the time a few years ago, when Indian outbreaks were more frequent than now and all sorts of bad characters infested the vast region known as the Wild West.

So much has been written of Young Wild West that it is not necessary to give a long description of him now.

Suffice it to say that he had won a reputation for his strict adherence to the right and his ability to always do the right thing at the right time.

At shooting with a rifle or a revolver he stood without a peer, and his courage and daring were undisputed.

Probably it was his extreme coolness that made him what he was more than anything else, for no matter what happened he never grew excited or lost his wits.

Colonel Merry looked at the boy and smiled as the question was put to him.

"Just like you, Wild," he said. "You are as cool as ever, I see. Well, I will soon tell you what the trouble is. About a hundred of the Creeks have banded together and have been making like miserable for some of the settlers scattered about these parts, and in two or three instances have held up travelers and robbed them. They are working the game as though there was a white man leading them, but from the advices we have received at the post here there are no tidings of such a man. When I heard you were over at Fort Bridger a week ago I made up my mind to hunt you up, and luckily one of my scouts met you and your friends this morning."

"That's right, colonel. I am very glad you found us, for there seemed to be nothing going on up at the fort. But that's over a hundred miles from here, and it is nothing strange that the Creeks should be on the warpath, I suppose. So there are about a hundred of them, eh?"

"Yes, that's right, Wild," and the commanding officer of the cavalry dropped all formalities and acted as though he was nothing more than a plain, ordinary citizen just then.

"Well, I reckon we will have to look into this thing. Have they been doing much damage, colonel?"

"Considerable," was the reply. "We have been hunting for them for over two weeks, and it seems that every time we get

close to them they manage to evade us. But, as I said before, I am satisfied that a white man is leading them."

"Well, if that is the case, you ought to have an idea of who he is."

"But I haven't, Wild. I can't think of any one to lay it to."

The two were sitting before the colonel's tent as the conversation went on and the cavalymen were lounging about the camp.

Not far distant was the camp of our hero and his friends. While they were virtually in the same camp, they had erected their own tents and kept themselves separate from the rest.

Young Wild West paused, as the colonel stopped talking, and took a look around.

His eyes fell upon a man with a head of very red hair, who was attired in the fashion of an ordinary hunter of the West.

This individual was sitting upon a rock, smoking and looking toward the two in front of the colonel's tent.

"Who is that fellow, colonel?" Young Wild West asked, as he turned to his companion. "I saw him come in right after we got here, and I was going to ask some one who he was, then. You didn't happen to be here at the time, and it was not until after we had pitched our tents that you came. But as I didn't ask any one else who the fellow is I now ask you."

"That fellow? Why, he is our best scout. He came to us right after the first depredation was committed by the Creeks. Really, he was the man to first give us the information that they had banded together and started on the warpath."

"Is that so? Well, what is his name?"

"He calls himself Red Robinson, though I believe he said his first name was John."

"I never heard of him, colonel. He may be all right, but I have met so many men since I have been making it a business of traveling about the wildest parts of the West that I have got so I can generally tell their characters by looking at them. If I were to give my opinion of that fellow just now I would say that he was a rascal."

"Well, he certainly does look to be. But when I tell you that he has rendered us valuable services I suppose you will have to change your mind, Wild."

"Well, that's all right. Suppose you call him over and I will have a little talk with him."

"Certainly."

The colonel walked a few paces from the tent and attracting the attention of the man under discussion he beckoned to him to come over.

Red Robinson, as he was called, arose slowly to his feet and after saluting the colonel, he knocked the ashes from his pipe and strolled leisurely over and stood before Young Wild West.

There was a sort of sneer on his face as the boy looked at him, which was as much as to say, "Well, I s'pose it's you what wants me, so go ahead an' let's hear what you have got to say."

"Robinson," said Colonel Merry, "this is Young Wild West. No doubt you have heard of him, for you have been in this part of the country longer than he has."

"Well, I've heard somewhat of Young Wild West," was the retort, and then the man stared almost insolently at our hero. "I knowed that it was him what wanted me to come over here. What does he want, colonel?"

"Well, he is going to help us corral the Creeks, so it would be in order for you to give him all the information about them that you can."

"Well, I reckon I kin tell him all he wants ter know, then. I've been right on top of that gang of redskins a lot of times, but it always happened that there was no one with me, an' of course I wasn't goin' ter try an' clean up ther crowd alone."

"Of course not," our hero observed, as he arose to his feet. "That would be a very foolish thing to do. But see here, Red Robinson, if you don't mind answering a few questions I will go ahead and ask them."

"Go ahead, Young Wild West," and the man smiled in a peculiar sort of way.

"How many redskins are there in the band?"

"Jest about a hundred, I should jedge, an' they've all got their war-paint on an' are well supplied with guns an' ammunition."

"Have you any idea what caused them to break out and start on the warpath?"

"No, I don't know nothin' about that."

"Ah! Then you really don't know much about them, after all."

"Well, I know that they've been killin' a few settlers an' robbin' some people what was travelin' along the trail."

"Some one told you about it, I suppose?"

"Well, I picked it up in different kinds of ways."

"So you have no idea what caused them to break away and strike out of the warpath?"

"Nope, I ain't got ther least idea."

"Do you know who their leader is?"

"Yes, he's ther Creek chief, Jumpin' Dog."

"It seems to me I have heard of Jumping Dog, but I never knew he was a very bad character. I had an idea that he was simply a chief who would fight a lot, but was not possessed of any ideas that would make a successful campaign. In other words, I thought Jumping Dog was merely a chief of the brute type, with very little brains or judgment."

"That's where yer make a mistake, Young Wild West. Jumpin' Dog is one of ther shrewdest Injuns what ever led a band on ther warpath."

"Maybe you are right. But he can't be the real leader. The colonel tells me that he is pretty certain that there is a white man who plans the raids and hold-ups that are taking place right along."

"Is that right, colonel?" and Red Robinson turned to the commanding officer in surprise.

"Yes, that is my opinion, Robinson," was the reply. "I never mentioned it to you or any one else before, but from what I have gathered of what has happened since the Creeks have been on the warpath, I have come to the conclusion that there must be a white man, who is very clever at such things, leading them on."

"Oh, yer have, eh? Well, accordin' to that, my services in this here matter ain't been much good to yer."

"Oh, yes, Robinson, you have done very well. You have brought in regular reports as to the whereabouts and movements of the band we are hunting for. That is all right."

"It seems to me, colonel," said Young Wild West, a peculiar smile showing on his handsome face, "that the information you have received from this man has not helped you any, since the Creeks are still at large. I have an idea he could give you a lot more information if he were inclined to do so."

"What do yer mean by that, you young hound?" Red Robinson cried, his eyes flashing, while at the same time he laid his hand on the butt of a revolver.

"Just what I said, Red Robinson. I have been looking at you long enough and listening to what you have said to be convinced that you know all about the movements of this band of Creeks. I consider that you are a scheming man, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if I learned that you were the real leader of them!"

"You—you lying young hound!" cried Red Robinson, his

eyes flashing with fury, as he made a move as though to clutch the boy by the throat. "You dare to say that?"

"Stop right where you are," came the command from Young Wild West, and with a quick movement he reached out with his left hand and pushed the man back.

Then turning to the officer in charge he added:

"Colonel Merry, I advise you to place this man under arrest at once."

"But," stammered the colonel, showing great surprise, "how do we know that he is guilty of any offense?"

"Well, when I saw him sitting over there he was watching us in a furtive way, and after I had sized him up for a few seconds I became convinced that he knew a great deal more about the band of redskins than he had told you. Another thing is, if he has been able to watch the movements of the Creeks so well, why hasn't he given you the opportunity to catch them? You should think of that yourself, colonel. Why, it seems to me that this fellow has been hoodwinking you."

"Well, I will admit that every time we acted upon his advice we were too late to catch the redskins," the colonel declared, shaking his head. "But I am hardly ready to place the man under arrest."

"Do as you like about it, then, colonel. Let him go if you wish. But I assure you that I will satisfy you later on that I am quite right in thinking that Red Robinson is in league with the band of Creeks who are on the warpath, and that he is actually the leader of them."

While the boy was talking he was keeping a sharp watch upon the accused man, who had stepped back and was standing in a sullen way, his eyes turned toward the ground.

"Robinson," the colonel said, rather sternly, as he fixed his gaze upon the man, "can you prove that what Young Wild West says of you is not true?"

"It ain't for me ter prove nothin', colonel," was the dogged retort, while a vengeful gleam shone in his eyes as he shot a glance at the young deadshot. "It's for him ter prove what he says, I reckon."

"Well, that is quite true, I suppose. The party who accuses another should furnish the proof. As it is, I am going to allow you your freedom."

"Thank you for that, Colonel Merry. Maybe I'll show yer afore many hours that I'm all right. As soon as I git somethin' ter eat I'm goin' ter strike out after ther redskins ag'in."

Young Wild West stood with folded arms, a smile on his face, and as Red Robinson turned and walked away, his eyes followed him.

"I haven't the least idea but that you are sincere in your conclusions, Young Wild West," the colonel said a moment later. "But I hardly see how I can place the man under arrest just because you suspected him. I believe you said you had never seen him before."

"That's right, colonel, I never saw or heard of him. But you will find out that I am perfectly right in what I said. However, let him go about his business. I am going to undertake to help you in this matter, and if this band of rascally Creeks is not corralled inside of two or three days, I miss my guess."

"You have my assurance that I will co-operate with you. I mean to leave it to you now, and I shall act strictly on your advice."

"All right, colonel. I will leave you now. I see my two partners are sitting over there as though they are anxious to find out what the trouble is. I will see you later."

The boy then saluted the commander in military fashion and walked leisurely over to the two tents that had been erected but a short distance from the spot where the cavalymen had camped.

It was near the close of a warm afternoon in summer, and the sun, though well down in the west, was still shining with a warmth that made it anything but comfortable.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were sitting on a log awaiting the approach of their dashing young leader.

Not far from them were the three girls who accompanied our hero and his partners on their horseback rides through the wildest parts of the country in search of excitement and adventure.

Just starting a camp-fire was Wing Wah, the cook, while his brother, Hop Wah, who was generally known as Young Wild West's clever Chinnee, sat on a rock preparing a fishing-rod, for there was a good-sized brook a short distance away.

"Well, Wild," said Cheyenne Charlie, the well-known scout, as the boy paused before him, "how did yer make out with ther colonel? Did yer promise him ter help find this band of

redskins that's been makin' so much trouble in these here parts?"

"I certainly did promise him that, Charlie," was the reply.

"What was ther matter with ther galoot what was called over to yer by ther colonel?"

"Well, Charlie, I have strong reason to believe that the galoot, as you call him, is in league with the redskins. I even accused him of it when I found he got a little too impertinent."

"Jest what I told Jim," and the scout turned and nodded to Jim Dart, the boy who sat beside him taking in all that was said.

Dart was a boy about the same age as our hero, and though he scarcely knew what fear was, and was always ready to do his part in anything that came up, he seldom had a great deal to say.

"We heard a little of the conversation that took place, Wild," he said, nodding to his young leader with a smile. "That fellow talked rather loud. I reckon we have got down every word he said."

"Well, it won't be much trouble to tell you the rest of it, then," and the young deadshot quickly related the entire conversation.

The girls had come up by this time and were listening attentively.

We might as well state right here that the "girls" were Arietta Murdock, Young Wild West's golden-haired sweetheart; Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, and Eloise Gardner, the sweetheart of Jim Dart.

So long had they been riding through the wildest parts of the West with the dashing young deadshot and his partners that they had become infatuated with the healthful outdoor life, and could hardly have been induced to remain in a city or town while their escorts continued on and followed their hobby of looking for adventure and a chance to help some one who needed it.

"So Red Robinson, as he is called, is going to strike out and look for the redskins again after he has eaten his supper, Wild," Arietta observed, as she shot a glance toward the group of cavalymen where the accused man was now sitting. "I suppose that means that you will follow him."

"You have got that right, Et," the young deadshot answered, with a laugh. "But don't speak too loud. Some one might hear what we are talking about, and then it might reach the ears of Robinson. It struck me right away when the colonel began talking that it was rather peculiar that the man he called his best scout had been unable to lead the cavalry to where the redskins were located. But the general appearance of him settled it at the first shot. I am just as well satisfied that Red Robinson is a scoundrel as I am that Hop is starting to go fishing."

The clever Chinnee was at that moment walking toward the brook, his rod and line in hand.

"If you say it, I know it must be true, Wild," Arietta declared.

The rest nodded, showing how well they believed in the young deadshot.

CHAPTER II.

TRAILING RED ROBINSON.

"Wild," said Cheyenne Charlie, when Hop Wah had disappeared around a bend in the rocks on his way to the stream, "I reckon that galoot yer call Red Robinson is goin' ter do some fishin', too. He's gittin' a pole an' line ready, if I ain't mistaken."

Sure enough, this was the case.

The man Wild had accused of being in league with the Creeks who were on the warpath was fixing up a pole that he had cut from the underbrush close at hand.

Young Wild West and his partners, as well as the girls, watched him, and when they saw him looking around the decaying wood that was scattered about they knew he was searching for bait.

"Well," said the young deadshot, nodding to his companions, "I suppose that fellow has as much right to fish as any one. But it seems to me that he wouldn't have thought of it if he had not seen Hop start off with his pole and line. However, we will let him go, and when he gets out of sight I will take a walk over there and see to it that he don't interfere with our clever Chinnee."

Bugs and worms were rather plentiful, so it was not long before Robinson had all he wanted, and then he set out for the brook.

Our friends did not appear to be paying any attention to him at all, but the moment he had disappeared from view Wild gave a nod and said:

"Come, Charlie, I reckon we will take a walk over that way and keep a watch. I have an idea that Red Robinson simply wants to go over there to question Hop. I may be mistaken, and if I am it is all right, anyhow."

"You kin bet your life it's all right, Wild," the scout retorted. "Come on. I hope ther heathen is lucky enough ter ketch some fish, for I wouldn't mind havin' a couple good-sized ones fried for my supper."

Jim Dart was well satisfied to remain with the girls.

The fact was that Eloise Gardner was the most timid of the three, since it was her nature to be that way.

While she could handle a rifle and ride a horse about as well as the average girl of the West, she did not possess the courage or nerve, as it might be called, that the scout's wife did.

But even Anna was not to be compared with Arietta, who had been born and reared in the Wild West and had been forced to fight quite a little in order to protect herself against the raids of savage Indians and white renegades.

Wild and Charlie moved slowly around in a direction almost opposite to that which had been taken by Hop and Red Robinson.

It was not long before they turned toward the stream, which was making considerable noise as it pursued its course in zig-zag fashion down the rocky descent.

When they came in sight of Hop he was sitting on a rock, his line in the water, and near him stood Red Robinson, making preparations to cast his hook into the brook.

Wild motioned for Charlie to be very careful, and then crept up until they were within less than twenty feet of the two.

"So you're goin' ter try ter ketch some fish, are yer, heathen?" they heard Robinson say.

"Lat light," was the reply. "Me allée samee ketchee plenty fishee, so be. Me velly smartee Chinnee."

"Well, when I seen that you was goin' ter try it, it struck me that I might do ther same thing. I like ter eat a fish now an' then. I've got a job on hand to-night, so I may as well go away on a full stomach."

"Whatee you do to-night?" Hop asked, looking at him innocently.

"I'm goin' ter try ter find where ther redskins are, so they kin be wiped out. Young Wild West seems ter think that I'm playin' ther colonel false. But I'm goin' ter show him jest what I kin do when I make up my mind ter do it."

"Me no undelstand," Hop declared, shaking his head, though he did, perfectly, for he had heard everything that Wild had told at the camp a short time before.

The villain, for such he undoubtedly was, now sat down a few feet from the Chinaman and proceeded to wait for a bite.

"What kind of a kid is Young Wild West, anyhow?" he asked, turning to the Chinaman.

"Young Wild West allee samee shootee velly muchee stlaight, so be," was the reply..

"Yes, I've heard tell of that. But there's others who kin shoot jest as straight as he kin, maybe."

"Me no believe lat," Hop declared, stoutly, as he shook his head. "Young Wild West beatee evelybody whatee comee 'long."

"Well, he'll find his match yet, heathen, an' don't yer forget it."

Just then Hop had a bite, and he landed a fish that weighed probably a pound.

"Me ketchee fishee allee light!" he exclaimed, jubilantly. "Me velly smartee Chinnee."

He tossed the fish to a place where it would be safe from getting back into the water, and then baited his hook and cast his line into the brook again.

It seemed that he was in luck, for in less than a minute he landed another, while Red Robinson waited patiently for a bite and failed to get one.

Wild and Charlie listened for a few minutes longer, but Red Robinson only asked a few questions concerning the ability of the Chinaman's employers in regard to fighting and shooting.

Of course, Hop answered in a way that should have convinced the villain that it would be a risky thing to do to tackle them.

He began catching a few fish after a while, while Hop continued on until he got sufficient, and when our hero and the scout saw that he was about to return, they showed themselves

and walked leisurely to the bank where the two were sitting. "What luck, Hop?" Wild asked, as though he had just arrived there.

"Me ketchee plenty fishee, so be, Misler Wild," was the reply, and Hop pointed to those he had lying on the ground. "By jove! you certainly have got a fine mess there! How are you making out, Red Robinson?"

"I've got three," was the reply, while the man kept his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Well, you are not as lucky as our clever Chinese, then. But probably your luck will change when you start out after supper to hunt down the redskins."

"I hope it will, Young Wild West. I want ter show yer that you made a mistake in what yer said a little while ago. I'm jest as straight as you are, an' don't yer forget it."

"Well, we won't argue that point just now. You go ahead and locate the Indians, and then I will help corral them."

"Well, I reckon if I kin locate 'em an' git ther cavalry there in time they kin be ketched without any of your help."

"Oh, you think so, en?"

"I sartinly do."

"And there are a hundred of them, too?"

"Yes, I s'pose there's jest about that many."

"Well, there are only about twenty-eight cavalymen here, including the colonel."

"Well, ain't that enough ter clean out a hundred redskins?" Red Robinson asked, as he fixed his eyes upon our hero's face for a moment.

"Well, it might be, unless the redskins were prepared for them. I believe you told the colonel that they are all well armed and have plenty of ammunition."

"Yes, that's right, too, but it ain't likely they'll be ready when an attack is made on 'em."

"Not unless some one puts them on their guard."

"Maybe you think I'd do that, Young Wild West?"

"That is exactly what I do think, since you have asked the question."

"Well, all right, you keep on thinking that way. But jest remember one thing. Me an' you has got ter have this thing out some time. I'm goin' ter prove first that I'm all right, an' then you have got ter git down on your knees an' beg my pardon for what you said right afore ther colonel."

"All right, Red Robinson. If it turns out that way I will certainly beg your pardon."

So saying, the young deadshot turned on his heel and, followed by the scout, went around the rocks and soon reached the camp.

Hop came along after them with the fish he had caught, and there being time to cook some of it for supper, Wing assisted his brother and soon this was being done.

In due time the supper was ready and, as usual, our friends all ate heartily, for their appetites never seemed to be at fault.

They were in the open air so much and took such an amount of exercise that they were bound to be hungry when meal-time came.

After the meal was over, Wild strolled over to the colonel's tent and soon was engaged in conversation with him.

"Well, I believe your expert scout means to do something to-night," the boy said, as he smiled at him.

"He says he will surely find them to-night," was the reply.

"Well, I hope he does. But don't put much stock in what he says when he comes back, for it seems to me that he might want to lead you all into a trap. I mean to take a look around myself after dark. Probably I might find the band of Creeks."

"You are not going with Robinson, are you?" the colonel asked, in surprise.

"Certainly not. He can go his way, and I mean to go mine. I think I will take Cheyenne Charlie with me, because he understands that sort of thing about as well as any one I know. But say, colonel."

"What is it, Wild?"

"Don't you mention a word of what I have said about going out to-night to Red Robinson."

"Of course not. Why should I do that?"

"Well, I thought you might let it out, unthinkingly."

"Well, I won't let him know a word of it. I think it best to let him go out and wait and see what sort of a report he gives when he comes back. While I have no doubt that you feel justified in your suspicions, I am not sure that you are right. I have been thinking it over since our conversation before supper, and it strikes me that Robinson should have accomplished something before this. But I am going to give him

one more chance. If he comes back and brings a report that the redskins are camped in a certain place that can be reached by us before morning, I mean to start right out. If we find the birds have flown when we get there I shall believe that Robinson is a traitor."

"Well, all right, colonel. But it may be that the birds are there when you arrive, and that they give you a surprise. It strikes me that Robinson means to play his trump-card to-night."

"What makes you think that way, Wild?" and the colonel looked rather anxious.

"Well, I can't tell you just why, but probably since he has been accused of being crooked, he may take a notion to wind up the game he has been working."

"You may be right. I hope you are not, but still I mean to be very careful in what I do. If you go out to-night and do any scouting, I hope you will report to me as soon as you come back."

"I certainly will, Colonel Merry."

The two talked a little longer on the same subject, and then Wild went back to the camp.

Those waiting there had been watching Red Robinson, and when Charlie remarked that he was getting ready to leave, Wild simply nodded and said:

"All right, let him go. As soon as he is out of sight you can get your horse ready, Charlie. I am going to take you with me. We are going to follow Red Robinson to-night."

"Jest about what I thought you would do," the scout exclaimed, jubilantly. "I was afraid yer might think of goin' alone, 'cause I was itchin' ter go along, Wild."

"Oh, I generally take you on such trips as this, Charlie. It seems that Jim would just as lief remain in camp with the girls, so that makes it a pretty sure thing for you to go every time."

"I am always ready to do anything you say, Wild," Dart spoke up. "If you say you want me to go with you I will only be too glad to do it. But if you say you want me to remain here I will be just as well satisfied."

"I know that, Jim. I think you would just as lief remain here on account of Eloise, who gets a little nervous when you go away."

The boy and girl blushed at this, and the rest smiled. There was no question that Eloise was deeply in love with her boy lover, and that the feeling was returned.

As soon as Red Robinson had saddled his horse he led it over to where the colonel was standing, and a short conversation passed between the two.

Then the villain mounted and, saluting the colonel, rode away.

He shot a glance toward the camp of our friends as he passed, but none of them appeared to be taking the least bit of notice of him.

He had not been gone more than three or four minutes when our hero mounted his horse and Cheyenne Charlie quickly brought his forward and followed suit.

They did not even look toward the colonel as they left, for Wild did not want to have anything more to say until he got back.

The sun had just disappeared below the line of the horizon in the west, and Wild knew it would not be a great while before darkness would set in.

This meant that he must get up pretty close to the man they were following in order to keep on his trail.

"We must be a little careful, Charlie," he said to the scout as they rode on up the rough mountain trail. "If he sees us following him he will be on his guard and we will not be able to gain much by it."

"That's right, Wild," was the reply. "But I reckon we kin foller him without bein' seen. We've done it ter lots of others afore, an' if we don't do it this time it will be mighty strange."

There was only one way that the man they were following could have taken, and this was through a narrow gorge that gradually led upward to the side of the mountain.

When Wild and Charlie had covered a distance of perhaps two miles they came in sight of the villain for the first time.

He had brought his horse to a halt near the edge of a cliff and was looking toward the west through the gathering darkness.

The two quickly turned their steeds to the left, so they might not be seen by the villain, and then watched him.

It was not long before the horseman at the top of the cliff turned and rode away to the right.

Then our two friends rode along at a gallop and when they

reached the place where they might ascend to the top of the cliff they were not long in doing so.

"Now, then, Charlie," said Young Wild West, as he nodded to his partner, "I reckon we know the direction to take, so all we will have to do is to keep right on. Most likely Red Robinson is riding fast now, for the country is quite level here. You can bet all you're worth that he is heading straight for the camp of the redskins."

"Right yer are, Wild," was the reply. "We'll git ther sneakin' coyote, an' don't yer forgot it. What you said about him is jest right, an' when ther colonel finds it out most likely he won't put so much faith in every one that comes along ag'in."

The two rode on until it was so dark that they were unable to see far ahead of them.

Then as they brought their horses to a slower pace they suddenly saw the faint glimmer of a camp-fire not far ahead of them.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAITOR.

"Well, Charlie," said Young Wild West, as he reined in his horse and looked toward the faint light that showed through the woods ahead of them, "I reckon we didn't have to go very far, after all. I feel certain that the Creeks are camped over there, and that Red Robinson has come here to put up a job to clean out the cavalymen and ourselves."

"It sartinly looks that way, Wild," the scout retorted, shaking his head, grimly. "I reckon ther best thing ter do with that galoot is ter put a bullet through him."

"No, Charlie, we don't want to do that unless he proves so dangerous that we are compelled to act in self-defense. What we want to do now is to creep up there and try and learn what he is up to. But come on. We can ride up a little closer, and then we will go the rest of the way on foot."

The two again started forward, and letting their horses walk, they drew closer to the light that was showing rather faintly, since the undergrowth was so thick that it could not penetrate very far.

They kept on, however, until they were within a hundred yards of the spot where the fire was blazing.

It was in a hollow, and satisfied that they would be able to approach without being observed, provided they used the utmost caution, Wild dismounted and his partner did likewise.

Throwing the bridle-reins over their horses' heads, they at once started cautiously forward, and soon reached the edge of the bank and were able to look down through the bushes into the hollow.

The fire that was burning was in about the center of the hollow, where the trees had been thinned out in some manner.

Half a dozen teepees were scattered about, and easily a hundred redskins could be seen in various attitudes.

It was easy for our two friends to pick out the tepee that was occupied by the chief, and once they had located it they crept around so they could see well what was going on near it.

They were not at all surprised to see Red Robinson sitting on a blanket with a redskin whose gaudy headdress indicated that he was the chief.

"There they are, Charlie," Wild whispered in the scout's ear, as he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"That's right," was the reply. "I s'pose that chief is ther one they call Jumpin' Dog."

"Most likely. Now, then, if we can only get near enough to hear what they are talking about everything will be all right."

"We kin do that, I reckon, 'cause I don't see that they've got any braves guardin' ther camp. Most likely they think it ain't necessary."

Wild gave a nod, and then started to creep around so he might get closer to where the two were conversing.

A number of the braves had gathered about them and were squatting upon the ground listening and looking on.

Wild did not stop until he was within about twenty feet of the tepee.

Then he moved slightly around and was able to look at the two who were conversing in rather low tones.

It was Red Robinson who was doing the most of the talking.

The chief nodded now and then and gave vent to a guttural exclamation.

But finally when the white renegade had completed the story

he was telling, Jumping Dog arose to his feet and turning to the braves gathered around, said:

"Young Wild West help the soldiers to catch Jumping Dog and his braves. Young Wild West heap much shoot. To-night we must kill Young Wild West and shoot the soldiers. Red Robinson, the paleface friend of the Creeks, will lead them all to us, and when we get them in the narrow pass below here we shoot them all very quick and take their scalps. Find plenty money and guns and all the things to eat. The Creeks have plenty good time."

Then he waved his hand and gave vent to the warwhoop of the tribe.

The rest joined in, and it seemed almost as though the cavalymen in camp might be able to hear it.

But when our friends considered that a ridge lay between them and that spot, they knew that such a thing would hardly be probable.

But they had heard enough of the few words the chief had used to address his followers to make them thoroughly understand what was in the wind.

Wild did not see fit to remain any longer, so touching the scout on the arm he turned and crept away from the spot.

Charlie followed rather reluctantly, for no doubt he felt that he ought to take a shot at the renegade who had planned to have the small party of cavalymen slain in ambush.

But he said nothing, and kept on cautiously until the horses were reached.

"I s'pose we're goin' right back, eh, Wild?" he asked, as he swung himself into the saddle.

"Yes, Charlie," was the reply, "that's the only thing to do now. We want to get there ahead of Robinson, of course. I reckon that Colonel Merry will change his opinion of the scoundrel when he hears what we have to say."

"He sartinly will, Wild."

"Well, I'll fix it with him so that Red Robinson will have his own way about it until the proper time comes. The narrow pass the chief spoke of must be somewhere close by, but you can bet that we are not going to ride through it to be slaughtered. When we come here we will take pains to find out just where the redskins are. Then we will see if we can't round them up."

"That's ther way we'll do it, Wild."

The two rode on back through the darkness, and letting their horses walk where it was dangerous traveling, they at length got back to the camp.

As they rode in every one there looked at them expectantly.

"How did you make out, Wild?" Arietta asked, as she ran forward to meet the young deadshot as he dismounted from his sorrel stallion, Spitfire.

"First-rate, Et," was the reply. "I was not mistaken. Red Robinson is a traitor."

"Well, I was sure of that after you once said you thought so."

Wild gave a nod, and then promptly walked over to the tent of the colonel.

That individual was standing there waiting for him.

"Well, Young Wild West," he said, as the boy saluted him, "you were not gone very long, I see."

"That's right, colonel. You see, we did not have to go as far as I thought we would. But we found out all that was necessary."

"Did you see anything of Red Robinson?"

"We certainly did. When we left the camp of the Creeks he was sitting on a blanket before the tepee of the chief, who was standing before him."

"What!"

Colonel Merry was dumfounded.

"That's right, colonel. Red Robinson is a traitor. He is everything I accused him of being, though I think he is about the limit when it comes to a genuine scoundrel. He has put up a job with the Creeks to ambush the whole lot of us to-night. Robinson will come back pretty soon and report that he has located where the redskins are. Then he will advise that all hands go and surprise them. The plan is to have us all go through a narrow pass and then the waiting Creeks will open fire on us and clean us out. A very nice scheme, colonel."

"It hardly seems possible that Robinson would do such a thing as this!" exclaimed the colonel, shaking his head.

"Well, every word of it is true. Here is Cheyenne Charlie. He will bear out everything I have stated."

"You kin bet your life I will, colonel!" the scout exclaimed,

without going to the trouble of saluting the officer in charge. "Me an' Wild follered that sneakin' coyote straight to ther camp of ther redskins. Then we sneaked up around' close enough ter hear him talkin' with Jumpin' Dog, ther chief. We couldn't hear exactly what they was sayin', but putty soon old Jumpin' Dog gits up an' tells his braves what they was goin' ter do. Now, then, if you don't believe me an' Wild, jest wait tll Robinson comes back an' near what he says."

"Oh, I certainly believe what you say!" the colonel answered, still acting as though it could hardly be possible that the man had betrayed them. "The moment he appears I will have him arrested and placed under guard."

"No, you won't, colonel," Wild spoke up, with a smile. "You just leave that part of it to me. I want you to make out that you put trust in him and agree to anything he says. In that way I think we may be able to corral the Creeks. Of course, we will see to it that he don't get away, and then the arresting part can take place. I suppose he will be court-martialed and shot, which fate he certainly deserves. But let us get the redskins first."

The colonel thought a moment, and then nodding to the boy, he answered:

"Just as you say, Young Wild West. I am going to leave this affair in your hands. But I think it advisable when Robinson returns to call you and let you hear his report."

"All right, you can do that. I certainly won't let on that I know anything about what is up."

The colonel deemed it advisable to tell the captain of the troopers about it, and then it soon became spread through the camp that the man they had depended on as an honest scout had arranged to betray them and have them all slaughtered.

Wild and Charley went among them and talked with the men, and soon they convinced them that the proper thing to do was to pay no attention to Red Robinson when he came back, but to act strictly under the orders of their superiors.

It was nearly an hour later when the clatter of hoofs sounded and Red Robinson rode into the camp.

Our hero and the scout were sitting in the little camp with the rest of our friends when this happened, and none of them seemed to take any particular notice of the arrival of the renegade.

But at the same time Wild was keeping an eye on him, and when he saw him dismount and stalk up to the tent of the colonel he shook his head and said:

"That fellow certainly has a great nerve. He is now about to try and impress Colonel Merry with the effect that he is all that he has claimed to be, and that the chance has arrived to catch the rebelling Creeks. We will take things easy about it. I suppose the colonel will soon call me, so I will have to go over there and make it appear that I was mistaken when I called Red Robinson a traitor."

Wild had scarcely said this when the colonel was seen to call his orderly, and the next minute the latter hastened to the camp.

"Young Wild West," he said, as he paused and saluted, just as though our friends were in military rank above him, "Colonel Merry wishes to see you at once."

"All right, orderly," the young deadshot said coolly, and then smiling at his companions he started over and soon stood before the colonel.

Red Robinson stood a few feet distant, and as Wild looked at him he noticed that there was a mocking smile on his face.

"Well, Young Wild West," the colonel said, "our scout has reported that he has located the Creeks. He thinks by the looks of things that they mean to remain in camp and oppose any attack that is made upon them. He says he is willing to lead us to the spot, and feels sure that we can take them by surprise. Are you ready to set out with us on this mission?"

"Why, certainly, Colonel Merry!" the young deadshot answered, and then he looked at the renegade scout and added:

"This makes about six or seven times that you have located them, I believe, Robinson."

"Maybe it does," was the reply, "but I feel putty sure that they didn't see me this time, an' that they'll stay right where they are."

"Did you have a good look at them?"

"A putty good look."

"You think there are about a hundred of them, and that they are all well armed, do you?"

"Yes, I think there's jest about that many. But I was mistaken when I seen 'em afore, 'cause I don't think they've got more than fifty or sixty men with 'em."

"Oh, that will make it all the easier, then, unless they

should happen to lie for us in ambush. Then it would not take very many guns to clean us up."

"Well, there won't be no ambush about this, 'cause they don't know nothin' about any one comin' after 'em. Of course, they must know that ther cavalry is located here somewhere, but they don't think that it's known where they are."

"They don't think so, then?"

"No."

"Well, that's all right, then. I was thinking that probably they knew all about it and was expecting us?"

Wild could not help giving this thrust, and he saw the villain wince at it, but he did not appear to notice it.

Red Robinson then went on and told quite a story of how he had caught a glimpse of the camp-fire of the redskins, and after a rather perilous bit of scouting he had got near enough to locate them perfectly, and even hear some of the conversation that was being carried on by the chief and his selected braves.

Wild appeared to be greatly interested in this, and when the villain had been dismissed by the colonel he waited until he was out of hearing and then said:

"Well, I reckon you're satisfied now, Colonel Merry."

"Perfectly satisfied," was the reply, as the speaker shot an angry glance after the retreating form of Robinson.

"I suppose you feel like exposing him right now, don't you?"

"Yes, I do feel that way, but I am going to act on your advice."

"Good! I am glad you feel that way. Now, then, whenever you are ready just let us know. You can leave a couple of men to guard the camp and we will leave the girls and the two Chinamen with them. I reckon twenty-nine of us ought to be able to make the round-up."

"Do you mean by that that you hope to surprise them and take them prisoners, Young Wild West?"

"Yes, the majority of them. Of course, there may be a few who will have to be shot. That is the way it generally is. Some of them will certainly put up a fight when they find that they have been surprised. It will be necessary to stop them, of course. But I think we can gather in the most of them alive."

"Well, why not go right away, then?"

"I am perfectly satisfied with that arrangement."

"Well, I will give orders at once. I will leave the corporal and one of the privates here with the ladies and the two Chinamen. The rest of us will ride on with Red Robinson until you tell us what to do when we near the Indian camp."

"That is very satisfactory," and so saying the young deadshot turned and went back to the camp.

"Well, boys," he said to his two partners, "I reckon we had better get our horses ready. The colonel has decided to go at once."

"Are we to go with you, Wild?" Arietta asked, looking up, eagerly.

"Hardly, Et," was the reply. "It is only a short distance we will have to go, anyhow, and I think you will be perfectly safe here. Besides, the colonel is going to leave two men in charge of the camp."

"Well, I should like to take part in the redskin round-up," the girl declared, shaking her head.

"Not to-night, Et. If it were in the daylight it would be all right, but you will please remain right here with Anna and Eloise. Hop must stay here, too."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," the Chinaman spoke up. "Me thlinkee maybe you lettee me go, too, so be. But me stay light here. Me velly goodee Chinees."

"Well, see that you do, Hop."

The Chinaman bowed and said no more.

Wild and Charlie saw the cavalymen busy saddling their horses now, so they proceeded to do the same thing.

In a few minutes they were ready to leave, and then Red Robinson rode up and saluted the colonel.

"Say when you're ready," he said, with a flourish of his hand, as though he was about to perform one of the most important duties of his life.

"We're ready now."

"All right, then, I'll lead yer till we git in sight of ther camp-fire. Then you'll know what ter do, I reckon."

"Young Wild West will ride with you," the colonel answered, as he turned and nodded to our hero.

The face of the villain fell when he heard this, but he made no objections.

Wild rode forward on his sorrel stallion and took his position at the side of Robinson.

Then at a word from the colonel the party set out.

Wild did his best to engage Robinson in conversation as they rode along, but the villain did not seem to want to have much to say.

However, he managed to get him to repeat a little of the story he had told in his report, and he appeared to be much interested.

Finally he looked at the villain and said:

"I suppose I ought to take back the accusation I made, Robinson."

"I think yer oughter," was the quick reply, "'cause I'm an honest man, an' I never told a lie in my life."

"Well, I'll wait until after we have corraled the redskins. Then I will make a due apology, if it is necessary."

"I'm satisfied ter that, Young Wild West."

The distance not being very great, as the reader knows, it did not take the party long to come within sight of the camp-fire, which was burning much brighter than when Wild and Charlie had first sighted it early in the evening.

Wild took it on himself to call a halt, and then turning to the renegade he said:

"Now, then, you will go with me to spy on the camp. Come on, Charlie; come on, Jim."

"That will be a little too risky, Young Wild West," Robinson declared, shaking his head.

"No, it won't. You come with us, I say."

"But there ain't no need of doin' that. I know of a way ter git around to ther other side of their Injun camp. All we've got ter do is ter ride down ther hill to ther right, a short distance, an' then we'll strike a narrow pass. By goin' through that we kin come up around on ther other side an' ketch ther redskins in a hurry."

"Well, we will do that after we have looked the camp over and see how things are. Come on."

"See here, colonel," Robinson said, as he turned and led his horse over to where the commanding officer was sitting in the saddle, "is Young Wild West runnin' this piece of business?"

"Yes, Robinson," was the quick reply. "You must do as he says."

"But he'll spoil ther whole thing if he has his way about it."

"I can't help that. I have left the matter entirely in his hands, so you will do just as he says."

"All right, then. If you say so I'll do it. But jest as like as not they'll hear us comin' an' light out."

"I hardly think they will do that, Robinson. You say there are a hundred of them and that they are all well armed. If they hear us coming they will certainly put up a fight."

"Well, maybe you know more about it than I do, so we'll let it go at that."

Then he turned and rode back to where Wild and his partners were waiting.

"Come on, Red," said Wild, in a very familiar way. "Just show us the redskins, will you? There's the camp-fire, all right, but it rather strikes me that we will find the birds have flown again."

"It does, eh? What makes yer think that?" growled the baffled villain.

"I don't know just what makes me think it, but I can't help thinking that way. But come on; we will soon see."

The villain said no more, and the four then set out, their horses at a walk, until they were at about the same spot Wild and Charlie had dismounted at on their former visit to the place.

Then they got off their steeds and, leaving them there, started ahead on foot, Wild being careful to force Red Robinson to go with them.

They were not very particular how they trod, either, and now and then the cracking of a twig was heard as they proceeded.

"They'll hear us comin' an' git away, see if they don't," declared Robinson, who was getting more uneasy at every step he took.

"It won't be your fault, then," Wild retorted. "Come on."

Two or three minutes later they reached the edge of the thicket that overlooked the hollow.

Wild took the renegade by the arm and now led him forward.

"There you are!" he said, as he peered downward. "There

is not a redskin there. But the fire is burning brightly. The birds have flown, sure enough, Robinson."

"I told you so!" exclaimed the villain, in a tone of triumph. "That's 'cause you didn't have sense enough ter come here without makin' no noise."

"Well, it's too bad. But I think they can't be very far away. We'll just go back and report to the colonel. Come on."

The renegade seemed perfectly willing to do this, so they were not long in returning to their horses and, mounting them, rode back to the waiting cavalymen.

Wild permitted the villainous scout to make his report, and when he had finished he rode forward and said:

"Colonel Merry, you had better place this man under arrest."

As the words left the lips of the young deadshot, Red Robinson gave a startled cry and then clapping the spurs to his horse, he rode away, like a flash, in the darkness.

CHAPTER IV.

WILD IS UNLUCKY.

Young Wild West had not expected Red Robinson to make a break for liberty, since he was so close to the cavalymen at the time that it seemed almost impossible for him to succeed even if he did so.

It must have been that the villain possessed a quick wit or he never would have tried it.

But as far as getting out of sight of our friends and the cavalymen was concerned, he succeeded admirably.

It was very dark where they had halted, and long before the clatter of hoofs died out Red Robinson was lost to view in the darkness.

Colonel Merry lost his temper entirely.

He began shouting out orders to the captain and regulars as well.

"Hold on a minute, colonel," our hero said, quietly, as he ran over to him and caught him by the arm. "There is no need of getting excited over this thing. Let the fellow go. I have promised you that we will corral the Creeks, and when the round-up takes place we will get Robinson with the bunch."

"You don't intend to give pursuit, then, Young Wild West?" the commander of the cavalymen asked.

"No, that would be extreme foolishness. You know pretty well that he will ride straight for the redskins, which would mean that they would simply wait for us to come along and then open fire on us. What must be done to-night shall be in a strategic way. You told me, I believe, that you were going to leave it all to me."

"I certainly told you that, Wild, and I now repeat it."

"All right, then. You stay right here and I will take Cheyenne Charlie and go and find where the redskins are. I am sure they are not very far away, so it won't take long for us to come back and make a report."

The colonel nodded, and then, after conferring with the captain, orders were given for the men to dismount and take up their temporary quarters right where they were.

Wild would have taken Jim with him, too, but he knew that if anything should happen, Dart's services would be valuable.

"Jim," said he, as he was ready to go away with the scout, "if we fail to report within an hour you can select one or two of the cavalymen to accompany you and come and look for us. I hardly think we will be away as long as that, but there is no telling what might happen."

"All right, Wild," the boy retorted. "I'll know pretty well what to do, I reckon. Go ahead."

Cheyenne Charlie was eager to accompany the young deadshot, so after once more bidding the cavalymen to remain right where they were and keep silent, our hero set out with him.

The two had heard enough to convince them about where the narrow pass was located, and without attempting to follow the direction Red Robinson had taken, they rode on through the woods until they came to a clearing, and then, after a short halt, found a way to get down the rather steep slope.

Robinson had suggested that they go that way, anyhow, and that was quite enough to indicate where the waiting redskins were stationed.

When they reached the foot of the descent they found the ground so rocky and uneven that Wild decided it best to dismount and leave their horses there.

"We'll go along on foot, Charlie," he whispered. "I am quite sure that we will not have very far to go."

"That's jest what I think about it, Wild," was the reply.

So the horses were left where they would not stray, and then the two picked their way cautiously along the ground and in less than two minutes they came to what seemed to be a regular trail.

The stars were shining brightly overhead, and there was just about enough light from them to let them see their surroundings.

Straight ahead a black-looking cliff reared itself, and the two made up their minds that it was through this that the narrow pass ran.

But they did not intend to go through any pass just then.

They were not looking for an opportunity to be slaughtered.

Feeling their way cautiously along, and not making a sound that could be heard at a distance of ten feet, Wild and Charlie continued on their way.

When they were within a few yards of the cliff they paused and listened.

It was well that they did so, for faint sounds of low, guttural voices came to their ears.

"Ah!" exclaimed the young deadshot, as he touched the scout on the arm. "I reckon we have found them, Charlie."

"We sartinly have, Wild," was the reply.

"Now, then, let's get a little nearer and see how they are located. Then you can go back and fetch the cavalymen here, while I wait and watch."

As they were creeping a little closer a cry similar to that of a night-hawk sounded not far away.

This was answered almost immediately by some one very close to them.

That it was an Indian who had answered both Wild and Charlie knew, so they took it for granted that the one who had first given the signal must be Red Robinson.

A moment later they heard the sounds made by a horse walking over the rocky ground.

"Charlie," said Wild, with his lips close to the scout's ear, "I reckon Robinson must have made quite a roundabout way of it. He is just arriving."

"That sartinly must be him, Wild," was the retort. "Well, we got here ahead of him. Now, then, we'll hear what they intend ter do."

They moved forward again, and did not stop until they were close enough to see the dark forms of the Indians, who were grouped in an open space within a few yards of the narrow pass.

It was through the latter that Red Robinson came, and as he dismounted several of the redskins got around him and talked excitedly.

"Young Wild West has spoiled our plans, Jumpin' Dog," they heard Robinson say, excitedly. "I jest got away from 'em by ther skin of my teeth. Come, we've got ter move away from here. Ther first thing we know ther whole bunch of cavalry will be after us, an' then there'll be some tall shootin' done. There ain't no need of any of us gittin' shot, so we had better ride on till we find a good place ter wait for 'em, an' give 'em a surprise when they come up."

The chief said something then that was hardly intelligible to our two friends, and then he gave orders to his braves, the result being that in less than five minutes they all mounted their horses and started to ride through the pass.

"Come, Charlie," said Wild, as he turned to go back to where the horses had been left. "I will mount Spitfire and follow them, while you can go back and tell Jim and the colonel what is up. Come along as soon as you can. You can ride pretty fast where the way permits it, for I will be between you and the redskins."

The scout gave a nod, and as soon as they reached their horses he mounted and started over the back trail.

Meanwhile, Young Wild West got upon the back of his sorrel stallion, Spitfire, and set out to follow the redskins and their white ally.

The boy was well satisfied that none of them had remained behind, so he boldly entered the pass.

It was not more than a distance of a couple of hundred feet to the other side, so he soon passed through and found himself in a comparatively open stretch of country.

It was not necessary for him to look for the trail at all, for the horse he rode was quite intelligent enough to follow it of his own accord.

The sorrel had been broken to such business, and he went along, picking his way and slowing down as the occasion de-

manded, while when everything was clear he went along at a quick canter.

Our hero had no idea just how far the redskins would go, but from what he had heard they meant to continue on until they found a suitable place to lie in ambush.

Keeping his eyes and ears on the alert, the brave young deadshot continued on until the open stretch had been covered.

A growth of oaks and scraggy pines now met him and permitting his steed to pick the way he went on at a walk.

Up an ascent of probably a hundred feet he went, and then the country became level again for a short distance.

Finally when he found himself riding through a gully which seemed to narrow down the further he went, Wild decided that he must be near the spot where the redskins intended to wait in ambush.

He stopped Spitfire, and after listening for a full minute, detected sounds that told him plainly that he had not been mistaken in what he thought.

The redskins were not far distant, and he judged that they had come to a halt.

"Now then, old fellow," he said, as he patted the sorrel on the neck and dismounted, "you are going to stay right here until I come back. Most likely Charlie will see you when he comes along, so he will know enough to stop."

Of course, the intelligent steed could not understand the boy's words, but he seemed to know that something was being said to him to the effect that he must remain there.

He switched his tail and raised his ears a couple of times, and then remained perfectly still.

Revolver in hand, Young Wild West now started through the darkness, keeping close to the left of the gully, where bunches of bushes and rocks were plentiful.

He picked his way around all the obstructions he came to, and when he had gone about a hundred yards he found himself right close to the Creeks.

It was so dark that he could not see them.

At the opposite side of the gully big rocks and boulders were scattered about, and it was behind these that the redskins and their white ally were concealed.

Wild took in the surroundings carefully.

At the top of the gully he judged that the ground was pretty level, and it struck him that if he were to go back and lead his partners and the cavalymen up there they might come along and take the redskins by surprise from above and behind them.

He had just made up his mind to do this and was moving around a clump of bushes when, without the least warning, an Indian bounded forward and threw him to the ground on his face.

Realizing his danger, the young deadshot rolled over quickly and struck an upward blow with his clenched fist.

It hit the redskin on the chin, but it availed the boy nothing, for two more were right on the scene in an instant.

Before he could use his revolver the weapon was knocked from his grasp and then he was struggling fiercely to gain his liberty.

But with three gripping him and doing their best to subdue him, he stood no chance whatever.

The result was that he was quickly disarmed and dragged across the gully, where he found himself in the midst of the horde of painted savages.

"Got one of 'em, eh?" a voice said, and then Red Robinson stepped up close to him and struck a match.

As the flame lighted up the face of the prisoner the villain gave an exclamation of delight.

"It's Young Wild West, chief!" he exclaimed, jubilantly.

"My! but what could be better? He's been follerin' us up, but he wasn't as smart as he thought he was. That idea of mine of sendin' half a dozen of your braves out ter wait around among ther rocks was a good one, wasn't it, Jumpin' Dog?"

"Red Robinson heap much smart paleface," the chief answered, with a grunt. "He know what to do."

"You kin bet your life, chief. I ain't been runnin' things for yer for ther last month for nothin', have I? Why, if it hadn't been for me you would have been nipped long afore this. But I pride myself on bein' a mighty smart galoot, an' I ain't ashamed ter say so, either. Now, then, we've got Young Wild West, which means a whole lot. He's ther one what's responsible for me bein' exposed as a traitor. Nothin' short of his life will satisfy me in ther way of revenge. Jest as soon as we git a chance I want Young Wild West burned

at ther stake, an' I'm goin' ter cut his scalp-lock off myself afore he dies."

"Ugh! Red Robinson can do as he likes," the chief answered.

Of course, this did not tend to make Wild feel any better, but he had long since recovered from the surprise he had received when he was knocked down, and he was just as cool as an iceberg at that very moment.

"You have got me, Robinson," he said, without a quiver in his voice. "But that's all right. You are never going to cut my scalp-lock off, and don't you forget it. I knew you were a scoundrel when I first set eyes on you. I accused you of being a traitor, and I told you that if I found you were not I would apologize. You don't suppose I would have said that if I had not been sure that my accusation was correct?"

"Well, I'll admit you figured it out putty well, Young Wild West," the villain answered, with a sneer. "But that's all ther good it's done yer. We've got yer now, an' there ain't nothin' on earth that kin interfere with us in carryin' out my plan ter put yer to death. I'd shoot yer right now if I thought any one was goin' ter come along right away. But I'd rather see yer die a lingerin' death, an' I know putty well that ther Creeks what's banded themselves together ter make war on ther whites an' steal all they kin would jest like ter see a paleface burnin' at ther stake. They're goin' ter have ther satisfaction of seein' it, too, an' you're goin' ter be ther victim."

"All right, Red Robinson, go ahead. If it happens that I must die at the stake I will take my medicine without a groan."

"Yer say that now, but wait till ther fire commences ter scorch your skin, an' you feel your clothes burnin' an' drop-pin' off in chunks of ashes. Ha! ha! ha!"

Wild said no more, for he knew he would gain nothing if he did.

The chief then called Robinson aside and they held a short consultation.

Wild could not hear exactly what they said, but enough reached his ears to make him understand that they had their doubts about remaining there for the purpose of ambushing the cavalrymen.

Robinson was inclined to think that probably some one else might have been with the young deadshot at the time of his capture, and that he had got away to warn the rest.

It was quickly decided that they would move again, and would find a place to hide until the following day.

Wild sat upon a rock under the guard of two of the redskins while preparations were being made to move away.

The Indians had plenty of horses, and some of them were used to drag along the supplies they had with them.

After awhile the boy was expecting Charlie to return with the cavalry, for he knew that just about enough time had elapsed for them to do so.

But they did not come, and when he was tied upon the back of a bony mustang and started off to the south he began to think that the situation was a desperate one.

But he never once feared the outcome, for so many times had he been placed in similar perils and had always succeeded in escaping them, that he could not bring himself to even imagine now that he would not escape.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLIE AND JIM ON THE TRAIL.

Cheyenne Charlie lost no time in getting back to Jim and the waiting cavalrymen.

He quickly gave his report to Colonel Merry, and then, without waiting a second, he turned to Dart and said:

"Come on, Jim, I reckon we'll go on ahead."

The boy was quite willing, so they set out and got at least a hundred yards away before they heard the cavalrymen coming.

The scout was so eager to get back to where he had left Wild that he decided to try and make a short cut.

Jim had not been that way before, so he left it all to his partner.

But Charlie had not been riding more than five minutes when he found that he had made a mistake.

The short cut had not panned out the way he thought it would, for it led along to the top of a cliff that was so steep that it would be impossible to get down with their horses.

After looking around for a minute or two and finding that it was impossible to go in that direction, Charlie turned to his partner and said:

"Well, Jim, I reckon we've got ter go back a little ways. I had an idea it would be good travelin' this way."

"Too bad, Charlie, but I reckon it will be all right. The chances are that the redskins won't leave where they are, and Wild will wait till we come."

They turned and rode back, and soon met the cavalrymen, who had been following the trail with no little difficulty.

Charlie quickly explained matters, so then they rode back until they came to the spot where the turn was.

A delay of fully fifteen minutes had been caused by Charlie's mistake, and when they finally came to the gully and found Wild's horse the Indians had been gone several minutes.

But, of course, they did not know this, so the scout and Dart dismounted and crept along through the gully, hoping to find Wild close at hand.

They hunted about in a cautious manner for fully five minutes, and then not hearing anything, Charlie decided that the redskins must have taken their departure, and that Wild probably had followed them.

He crept around to the other side behind the rocks, and soon became convinced that his supposition was correct.

"Well, Jim," he said, shaking his head, sadly, "I reckon I made a fool of myself when I undertook ter make a short cut. If we had come right ahead most likely we would have been here in time ter see 'em gettin' ready ter leave. But I can't understand why they've left. This place here looks jest about ther kind that they would want ter shoot at us from behind ther rocks. But where is Wild? That's what's botherin' me."

"Well, he must have followed them, Charlie," Jim answered.

"Yes, but if he done that why didn't he go back an' git his horse?"

"I was thinking about that, too. It may be that the redskins have got Wild."

"That's what I'm thinkin', though I hate ter say it."

"Well, what are we goin' to do, go back and get our horses, or proceed on foot?"

"We'll go an' git our horses, I reckon, an' then fetch ther cavalrymen on with us."

That settled it, for Jim was of the same mind, and back they went to report to Colonel Merry.

"Well," said the colonel, shaking his head, gravely, "this seems to be a sort of wild-goose chase we are on. But I am worried about Young Wild West. Where could he have gone?"

"We'll find him all right, an' don't yer forgit it, colonel," Charlie retorted. "If ther Injuns has got him they won't keep him long."

"Well, if they have got him I fear that he must be dead before this, for Red Robinson surely would feel like taking his life, since he must blame him for his exposure."

"Colonel, Injuns don't kill their prisoners in a hurry. These Creeks what have got together to shoot down all ther pale-faces they kin will want ter go back to ther old ways of doin' things. Most likely they consider Wild is a mighty good prize—I mean if they have really got him. They'll want ter make him suffer a whole lot, an' even if Red Robinson is bossin' ther job he couldn't make 'em kill ther boy right away."

"I hope you are right in what you think, Cheyenne Charlie. But maybe, after all, Wild has not been caught by them. I think he has simply followed them so they could not get away in the darkness."

"Maybe he has, but it seems funny to me an' Jim why he didn't come back an' git his horse."

"Perhaps he thought he didn't have time."

"Yes, that might be. But come on. We may as well git on ther trail."

The horses of the cavalrymen were comparatively fresh, since they had been resting nearly the entire day, and the men were all eager to catch the band of Indians that had been making so much trouble.

They had been searching for them for a considerable length of time now, and each time they thought they had them dead to rights something had turned up the other way.

Of course, they all understood now that Red Robinson, the man they had trusted to be an honest scout, was responsible for this.

This caused them all to have anything but pleasant feelings for the rascally renegade.

With Charlie and Jim in the lead, they rode along through the gully, and reaching the spot where the Indians had been waiting, a halt was called.

The scout was not long in finding the trail, though it was very dark in the woods.

Jim led Wild's horse along, and when they again set out

he permitted the intelligent sorrel to go ahead, for he knew quite well that there was not a horse in the party that was to be compared with this one at following a trail in the dark.

It was not possible for them to go very fast, since the trail led this way and that, and fallen trees and rocks often caused them to stop until they found a way to get around.

Spitfire went on ahead, sometimes pulling hard upon the rope that Jim was holding, as though he was eager to get to his young master.

In this way they kept on until it was past midnight.

By this time the men were getting tired, as well as the horses, and the colonel rode up and down the line and gave words of encouragement, a thing that he seldom had done before.

But he had been dispatched with the handful of men to run down the band of Creeks, and he meant to do his duty well.

He cared nothing because he might be lowering his dignity by talking freely with the men.

The captain of the company was there, too, but he had little to say, or seldom offered a word of advice, since, no doubt, he felt a sort of sting because a colonel had been sent out with him.

It must have been about two o'clock in the early morning when Colonel Merry decided that it would be useless to proceed any further without a rest.

He rode up to Cheyenne Charlie, whom he regarded as the leader now, since Young Wild West was not there, and said:

"Well, I think it advisable to call a halt and wait until daylight. If we keep on this way the men and horses will be so tired when daylight comes that they won't be able to do much."

"Well, I don't know about that, colonel. It seems ter me they ought to be able ter do as much as ther redskins, 'cause they're goin' on all ther time, an' I'm sartin of it. But maybe it would be a good idea ter stop right here an' take a rest. Me an' Jim will go on with Wild's horse, 'cause we've made up our minds that ther quicker we find ther redskins ther better it will be. We're both sartin that Wild is a prisoner among 'em now, an' that means that his life's in danger. Most likely jest about sunrise they'll start ter torture him ter death. Redskins generally takes either sunrise or sunset for such a piece of business. You stop here an' git a good rest, an' then yer kin strike out a little after daylight. Ther trail will be plain then, so yer oughter make better headway. We're goin' on."

"Well, if you think it advisable for us to continue we will go with you."

"I think it will be just as well for you to stop and get the needed rest, colonel," Jim Dart spoke up.

"Yes, that's right," the scout added. "We'll go on."

Then, without any further talk, our two friends rode on, Jim still holding the rope that was about the intelligent sorrel stallion's neck.

The two went on for about a mile further, and then they were glad to find that there was a long stretch of comparatively level ground ahead.

The trail ran along in zigzag fashion, and led straight toward a mountain that could be seen through the darkness by the light of the stars.

"Jim," said the scout, shaking his head as they went at a faster gait, "I reckon ther redskins is lookin' for a place ter hide instead of one where they kin lay behind rocks an' shoot us down. They must have sorter got a little scared. But I s'pose they want ter git somewhere so they can't be disturbed, an' then go ahead an' burn Wild at ther stake, or do somethin' else ter him afore they kill him outright."

"That's right, Charlie," Dart answered, gravely. "We must find them before sunrise, for if we don't I am afraid we will be too late."

"Yes, that's right. Jest about ther time ther sun begins ter show itself above ther hills to ther east they'll be startin' up ther ceremony. Ther Creeks has been putty good for ther last year or two, but when they once start out they're jest as bad as any of ther other tribes. When they git a white prisoner, especially one that they know is of some account, they want ter have a big time with him, an' make him die by inches. Red Robinson sartinly has told 'em who Wild is, an' that will make old Jumpin' Dog feel like givin' him ther limit of anything he kin think of in ther way of torture."

The two continued on until a grayish light began showing to the east.

Both were quite uneasy now, though they could not help thinking that they must be very close to the redskins.

Jim declared that they could not have traveled any faster than they had been going, and that meant that as soon as they halted it would not be long before they overtook them.

It was a very wild spot on the mountainside where the two first saw the daylight beginning to show.

But fortunately they had little difficulty in keeping a'long, though sometimes they were compelled to let their horses walk for a considerable distance.

As it gradually grew lighter and objects became plainer, they strained their eyes and looked ahead.

Suddenly the scout saw smoke rising from behind a hill that was probably a mile distant.

"There yer are, Jim!" he exclaimed, raising his hand and turning to his companion. "They've started a fire. Whether it's for ter cook grub with or ter burn Wild, I don't know; but one thing about it is that we've got ter git there in a jiffy. Jest see that your rifle is all right."

"My rifle is always all right, Charlie," was the quiet retort. "Come on."

Spitfire pricked up his ears as Jim jerked slightly upon the rope, and away he went, almost pulling the boy from the saddle.

Charlie advised that the sorrel be led now, so after a little trouble Jim managed to pull back upon the rope and get him behind.

Along a wide ledge they now rode, and after a short ascent they struck a sort of tableland, which was covered with a pretty thick growth of chaparral.

The smoke could still be seen, and as they drew nearer other columns of it arose.

"It seems to me that they're takin' a putty good risk in makin' their fires," the scout remarked, with a shake of his head. "That don't look much as though they're tryin' ter hide from ther cavalymen."

"Well, I don't know, Charlie," Jim answered, thoughtfully. "Probably they have an idea that we couldn't follow them all through the night, and they are cooking their breakfast early, thinking that no one will be near enough to see the smoke from the fires."

"Yes, they might be, too. But I hope they ain't started ter do anything with Wild yet."

"I feel sure that they haven't, Charlie."

The scout gave a nod, for Jim's words encouraged him greatly.

He could tell by the way the boy spoke that he meant just what he said.

They rode on until they thought it advisable to dismount and leave the horses.

It was necessary to tie the sorrel, for he seemed to be eager to go on ahead, and fearing that he might spoil their plans, they were compelled to do so.

They had less than a quarter of a mile to go now, and each holding their Remingtons ready to fire a shot, should it be necessary to do so, they covered the ground rapidly, ascending toward the summit of a high bluff.

It was from the other side of this that the smoke came, so they knew they would soon be in sight of the Indian camp.

Charlie and Jim were not long in getting there and then, as they expected, they looked down for a distance of probably a hundred and fifty feet and saw the camp of the Creeks.

A dozen or more fires had been kindled, and over them the braves were cooking meat they had brought with them.

This the two took in at a glance, and then their eyes roved about in search of something else.

They soon saw what they were looking for.

Tied to a stout sapling that stood almost in the center of the natural clearing was Young Wild West, while half a dozen braves were piling dry brushwood about him.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, turning to his partner, "we ain't a minute too soon, Jim. They're gittin' ready ter burn Wild ter death."

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESCUE.

It was a rather long journey that the redskins made through the dark woods and over the rough mountains, but Young Wild West did not fret much over the strain.

He was confident that his partners would not be long in getting after them, and since he had heard enough said during the time occupied by the long march to satisfy himself that no harm would come to him before morning, he simply hoped and expected to be rescued.

He hardly thought the band would be overtaken during the night, since it was too dark to permit them being followed. It was growing daylight when the Creeks halted in what they considered to be a very snug hiding-place.

The young deadshot was quickly taken from the horse he had been tied to and then he was securely bound to a small tree.

He said nothing at all, but watched them as they made preparations for an early breakfast.

As it grew lighter he could notice that the spot was almost entirely surrounded by frowning cliffs, which were not so very high, but reared themselves almost straight upward.

It was through a narrow opening that the Indians came when they arrived there, and Wild was pretty certain that though they thought themselves wise in selecting such a place, it would prove disastrous to them in case the cavalry learned they were there and had time to prepare for action.

From the cliffs above the Creeks could be shot down without mercy, if it was so desired.

But the last part of the way had been very stony, and no doubt they figured on hiding their trail.

However, Wild knew that his partners could not be fooled, even though others might be in that respect.

Numerous fires were started, and the Indians proceeded to cook their breakfast, talking in guttural tones as they did so.

It was not until they had nearly finished eating this that Red Robinson emerged from the tepee he had sought refuge in the moment it had been erected after the arrival of the band in the secluded spot.

The chief had gone there, too, but he did not come out just then.

Robinson walked over to where the helpless boy was bound to the tree and, looking at him, a cruel smile on his face at the time, he exclaimed:

"Well, I reckon you're as far as you'll ever git, Young Wild West. It was me who got ther chief ter tie you to that tree. I don't intend that you shall ever leave it alive. You're goin' ter be burned alive. Jest as soon as ther sun shows itself over there," and he pointed to the east, "a fire will be started around you an' then as yer begin ter burn I'm goin' ter make a dive for yer an' cut your scalp-lock loose. I'll wave it in your face while you're dyin'. How's that for revenge, you meddlesome kid, you?"

"That's all right," Wild answered, in the cool and easy way that had helped make him famous, "no doubt you enjoy thinking of such a thing, and probably it pleases you a whole lot to say it. But it hasn't happened yet."

"No, it ain't happened yet, but it'll happen jest as soon as ther sun comes up. There ain't nothin' on earth that kin stop it, either."

"Oh, I think a few bullets might stop it."

"Where are they comin' from, Young Wild West?" asked the villain, jeeringly. "You don't s'pose that your pards or any of ther cavalymen could ever find ther way here, do yer? Why, our trail was lost long ago. We've got Injuns with us what knows how ter do that kind of thing. They led ther way, an' they picked out places where no marks would show. Of course, I don't say we won't be found here if we stop two or three days, but no one will come here for many hours yet, an' you kin bet on it."

"Well, let it go at that. I am not worrying a whole lot. This is not the first time I have been in such a fix. I have an idea that the time will come yet when I will have my hand on your throat, Red Robinson."

"You'll never git your hand on my throat, Young Wild West. I'll see ter it right away that things is fixed up for your finish."

The villain turned on his heel, and after speaking to three or four of the Creeks, he came back and stood there, with folded arms.

Wild saw the redskins he had spoken to start away and begin to gather arms full of underbrush.

He knew what they meant to do, but still he did not show the least concern.

Presently the braves began piling up the fagots they gathered about him, and in the course of ten minutes the pile was up to his armpits.

He knew very well that if a match was applied to the brush it would be but a few minutes before he would suffer from the fierce flames.

There had been no rain in several days and the heap would burn like tinder.

Red Robinson stood there watching him for the space of ten minutes.

But never once could he detect the least sign of fear on the handsome face of the dashing young deadshot.

Finally he turned and walked over to one of the fires, and Wild saw him sit down and begin to eat ravenously of the food that one of the Creeks offered him.

"Well, it looks as though I am in for it, unless Charlie and Jim show up pretty soon," he thought, as a grave look showed upon his face for a moment. "But I can't believe but that they will find the way here. They won't rest until they do. I know that well enough. I can always depend upon my partners."

A flash came in his eyes as he gave vent to the thought, and then he turned them searchingly about the cliffs.

There was a faint glow of yellow in the east, and he knew it would not be very long before the sun would show itself.

He looked about carefully for over a minute, but could see nothing that gave him the least encouragement.

There were no signs of Charlie or Jim, or any one else, so he was forced to keep on hoping for them to come.

Red Robinson finished eating his breakfast, and then walked leisurely over to the tepee into which the chief was no doubt taking a nap.

Wild heard him calling Jumping Dog to wake up after he entered, and then it was not long before the chief appeared, rubbing his eyes and yawning.

"It ain't no time to go ter sleep, Jumpin' Dog," he heard the white villain say. "Didn't yer say last night that ther minute ther sun showed itself in ther east Young Wild West was to be burned at ther stake?"

"Red Robinson is right," was the reply. "The dog of a young paleface must die. He shall burn until the flesh falls from his bones. The Creeks hate the palefaces, and Young Wild West has made great trouble for them."

"Well, there he is over there," and Robinson pointed in a fiendish way to the helpless boy, whose head and shoulders showed above the pile of fagots.

Jumping Dog gave a nod, and then walked over to the spot, followed by his renegade adviser.

"Good-morning, chief!" our hero said, with mock politeness. "You didn't have a very long sleep, but I hope you feel better for it."

"Ugh!" grunted the Creek chief, savagely. "Young Wild West heap much brave. Make believe he no afraid. Pretty soon the fire will burn. He will feel the flames as they scorch his clothes and set them afire. Then the fire will touch his flesh and he will cry for mercy. But no mercy will come from the Creeks. They hate the palefaces. Young Wild West make much trouble for the red men. He must die the same as the palefaces died when the forefathers of Jumping Dog and his braves put them to death."

"Well, Jumping Dog, if I must die you will find I will do it like a man, even though I am nothing but a boy," the young deadshot retorted, coolly. "But let me tell you something. In case I don't die, you will be very sorry that you ever listened to that scoundrel standing by you. No doubt he has profited a whole lot by the way he has acted with you. Probably you think you have profited also. But you will find when the time comes that you will wish a thousand times that you had stayed on the reservation and behaved yourself. The time has long passed when the redmen of the West could have their own way. The palefaces outnumber them, and though they may start on the warpath and kill off a few, they are sure to get the worst of it in the end. If you are a wise chief you will loosen my bonds at once and give me back my weapons, and then turn Red Robinson over to me as a prisoner."

"What do yer think of that, Jumpin' Dog?" Robinson exclaimed, turning to the chief and laughing. "He wants yer ter let him go an' let him take me along as a prisoner. That's what I call somethin'! What do yer think of it, anyhow?"

"Boy heap much fool!" grunted the chief.

"Well, I should sorter reckon that he was. I never heard tell of sich nerve, blamed if I did!"

Then the villain laughed, as though he thought it very much of a joke.

Wild remained perfectly cool.

He knew he had but a short time to live, unless some one came to his aid, but he did not think of wavering.

He looked up at the cliffs again and then, much to his joy, he saw a hat waved in the air once.

"Charlie and Jim are here!" he thought. "Now, then, I

rather think the redskins and Robinson will be surprised before long."

The hat had appeared from behind a big rock on the cliff that was almost directly above the tepee the chief occupied.

Wild did not change the expression of his face now, for he had such a good control of his feelings that he was not going to let his enemies know that help was at hand.

None of the Creeks had seen the hat when it was waved, that was certain.

If they had, a commotion would have started right away.

He cast an occasional glance toward the spot the signal had come from, but saw nothing more that would indicate the near presence of his partners.

Meanwhile the yellow gleam in the eastern sky was broadening.

The sun would soon show itself.

Jumping Dog and Red Robinson walked over and sat down before the chief's tepee.

Wild watched them, for he knew when the order to light the pile of fagots was given it would surely come from one of them.

Several of the ugly-looking warriors remained about the spot that was to be the boy's funeral pyre.

Their faces were smeared with war-paint, and they seemed to take pride in trying to make themselves appear fierce.

Wild looked them over, and finally he picked out a brave who could not have been more than twenty-five, and said to him:

"I reckon you have never had your war-paint on before, redskin."

"The paleface boy is right. This is the first time Little Buck has ever put on the war-paint," was the reply.

"So your name is Little Buck, then?"

"That is the name given me by my father, Young Wild West. I have another name, which was given me by the white teacher when I went first to the school. But Little Buck is right. I don't want the name of the palefaces."

"You went to school and you were taught to read and write like the whites, Little Buck?"

"Yes, I can read and write."

"Then you must know that you did wrong when you put on your war-paint and started out with Jumping Dog to kill and take the scalps of the white people."

"The palefaces might call it wrong, but the Creeks know it is right."

Wild smiled and looked at him keenly.

"But you know it is wrong," he declared, after a slight pause. "You know what the consequences are likely to be when you are caught by the cavalymen. You had better change your mind, Little Buck. If I am roasted alive by the Creeks you will suffer for it, for you are one of them."

"The cavalymen will never catch us," was the reply.

But it was not said in a way that showed a great deal of confidence.

The young deadshot knew very well that the Indian was even then thinking of what might happen later on.

Presently the chief called some of the Indians to him.

Little Buck lingered near the boy prisoner.

But he was soon called to take part in the pow-wow.

This was encouraging to our hero, since he knew it would be the means of gaining more time.

He kept looking alternately to the top of the cliff and at the group of redskins.

Those not taking part in the pow-wow remained standing and sitting about in apparent indifference.

But that was the Indian way of it.

The boy knew that they were really eager to see the pile of brush lighted, but they would not show that they felt that way until the moment arrived.

The buckskin thongs with which he was bound to the tree cut into his flesh, but Wild did not mind it.

If Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were able to cut him loose he would give a good account of himself when the proper time arrived.

Presently the sun began to show above the slanting peak of a distant mountain.

The redskins began gathering about the boy.

Wild began to grow a little uneasy.

But he was still confident that his partners would find a way to save him.

Red Robinson walked over, pushing his way through the throng.

The Creek chief gave a few orders to his braves, and the

result was that several of them took their stations about the edge of the hollow, near the entrance, and remained on guard.

Wild knew this was done to keep them from being surprised at their fiendish work.

But he did not think his partners would try to reach the spot that way.

They were at the top of the cliff.

"Well," said the villainous white renegade, as he paused close to the head of dry brushwood and looked at the boy in triumph, "I reckon your last hour on earth has arrived, Young Wild West!"

"Oh, I don't know!" was the cool reply. "I think I have already told you that I have been in as ticklish places as this before."

"Yes, yer did say that. But this is ther time when you've got ter make ther long journey. You don't stand a ghost of a chance now, an' you know it."

"We will see about that, you scoundrel! I expect to live long enough to see you get your medicine, so put that down and remember it."

"Do yer see ther sun risin' over there, Young Wild West?" the villain said, mockingly, as he pointed to the crest of the glowing orb of day. "Well, jest take a good look at it, for this is ther last time you'll ever see it."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Jumping Dog, as though he was becoming impatient. "Let the paleface burn. The Creeks must have revenge for the wrongs the palefaces have done them. Little Buck will light the fire."

Little Buck was the brave Wild had been talking to, and when he saw him give a start at what the chief told him to do he knew his words had made an impression.

"Maybe the paleface brave like to start the fire, Jumping Dog," he said, nodding toward Red Robinson.

"Oh, I'll start ther fire going!" the villain exclaimed. "I feel jest like doin' it. Young Wild West exposed me to Colonel Merry jest when I had things about right to clean up the whole bunch of cavalymen. I want my revenge, so I'll set ther pile of brush going."

He turned to go to the nearest fire to get a blazing fagot, but Jumping Dog stopped him.

"Little Buck will light the fire," he said, sternly. "He has spoken in favor of the paleface prisoner, but the council went against him. He wanted to let Young Wild West go free. He did not tell it in words, but Jumping Dog can read what he thinks."

Wild could not help casting a grateful look at the Indian, who had been sufficiently educated to make him know right from wrong.

But he knew Little Buck was placed in a bad position just then, so he said:

"Do as your chief tells you, Little Buck. I am not afraid to die!"

This caused more than one of the Creeks to show surprise. Instead of begging for his life, as ninety-nine out of a hundred would surely have done, Young Wild West was urging his own death.

But the young deadshot had a reason in saying this.

He felt that he had the brave on his side now, and if he had courage enough to cut his bonds when he was applying the torch to the brush he might have a chance to get away.

He looked Little Buck in the eyes and the Indian seemed to read his thoughts.

The glance Wild received told him that Little Buck was his friend.

"Well, go on an' start ther fire blazin'," said Red Robinson, impatiently, as he nodded to the Creek brave.

Little Buck nodded his head, and then strode for the fire.

Nearly all the fires had died down by this time, but there were embers in any of them that could be used for the purpose of starting the big pile of fagots into a blaze.

He selected a stick that was burning at one end, and fanning it into a flame, as he walked along, he hurried to the tree.

"Little Buck will do as the chief says," he exclaimed, as he bowed his head to Jumping Dog. "Little Buck is a true Creek, though he was taught to read and write in the school of the palefaces."

"Start ther fire!" roared Robinson.

The brave cast a contemptuous glance at him and waited, all the while keeping the stick blazing.

"Little Buck burn the paleface boy," said the chief.

The brave promptly turned and thrust the firebrand into the pile.

A smoke arose as the small fagots lighted and soon there was a blaze.

Waiting until he was sure that the flames had got hold of the pile, Little Buck threw down the stick.

Then he leaned over toward the helpless boy and exclaimed: claimed:

"Young Wild West will die unless his friends come to help him."

At the same instant his knife slipped forward and cut the thong that held the young deadshot to the tree.

Two quick slashes followed this move and then Wild was free!

But the pile was blazing furiously now, and it seemed as though Little Buck was in danger of being burned, too.

Crack! crack! crack!

Three shots were fired in quick succession, and the chief and two of the redskins close to the burning pile fell to the ground.

"Whoopee! Wow! wow! Yip! yip! yip!"

It was Cheyenne Charlie's cowboy call that rang out, and then knowing that his partners were at hand, Wild sprang from the brushwood and made for the exit of the hollow.

Yells of anger and dismay went up from the surprised Creeks, and it seemed as though pandemonium had actually broken loose.

But Wild saw Charlie and Jim standing beside a big rock a few yards distant and he ran for them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESCAPE.

Though Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were somewhat excited when they saw the perilous position of Young Wild West, they were not dismayed.

Many times before had they succeeded in rescuing him from a position that was similar.

They quickly calmed down, and then from behind a big rock they watched the movements of the redskins.

"Jim," said the scout, in a whisper, as he nodded to his companion, "I reckon they must be waiting for ther sun ter come up. You know as well as I do that redskins generally burn a prisoner at ther stake either at sunrise or sunset."

"That's right, Charlie," was the reply. "We have got to do something, and quickly at that. We have no time to go back and get the cavalry to come here. What must be done we two must do."

"Well, I reckon we had better git down somewhere an' try an' sneak into that hollow. I s'pose if we went over there a little ways we might stand a chance of lowerin' ourselves down by a rope. It's a lucky thing I brought my lariat when I got off my horse."

"Well, you always do that, Charlie," and Jim smiled faintly. "I have mine, too."

"Yes, that's right. But let's wait here a minute or two an' maybe we kin attract ther attention of Wild, so he'll know where we are."

They settled down behind the rock, Jim at one end and Charlie at the other, on the watch.

When they saw the chief talk to his braves and send them out to guard the entrance of the hollow they knew that it would be a difficult matter to get in by that way.

After awhile Jim saw Wild looking toward the very spot where they were hiding, and then he took the risk of waving his hat.

He knew the signal had been seen, and he felt better right away.

"Now, then, Charlie," he said, "he knows we are here, so he will be prepared for anything that may happen. I believe, as you say, that the redskins mean to burn him alive as soon as the sun comes up. It is for us to prevent it. The question is, how are we going to do it?"

"Well, I reckon we have got ter git down there, Jim," was the retort, and the scout shook his head and looked puzzled.

"That's right, but we certainly will stand no show of getting in that way," and Dart pointed downward toward the narrow entrance between the rocky walls that almost completely surrounded the spot where the Creeks had taken refuge.

"We might run in an' git ter him so we could cut him loose, but as for gittin' out ag'in, I wouldn't say about that," and Charlie shook his head.

"Well, we won't try it that way. You spoke of our lariats,

so I reckon we had better put them in use as soon as possible."

Then both stepped back from the rock and turned their gaze toward the opposite side.

"I reckon there's ther best place ter try it, Jim," Charlie said, as he pointed toward a spot where the cliff seemed to be the lowest. "It ain't more than twenty-five or thirty feet of a drop over there, an' it's putty well away from ther bunch of redskins. S'pose we go over there, an' then when there ain't no one lookin' that way you kin lower me down. You kin make ther rope fast ter a tree, an' if ever' thing is all right after I git down you kin come after me. Of course, it ain't likely we kin git out that way after we git Wild loose. But we won't worry about that now. We'll wait till ther time comes."

Jim gave a nod, and then without another word the two started to walk around the circular cliffs.

It was easy for them to do this without being observed by the Indians below, and in two or three minutes they had reached the spot that seemed best suited for their purpose.

All this time it had been growing lighter in the east, and when they had fastened Charlie's lariat to the trunk of a stout tree the sun was showing above the mountain range to the east.

Both saw that the redskins were making preparations to execute their fiendish plans.

But they felt that the best time to act would be just when they were ready to set fire to the pile of brushwood.

They waited a while and listened to what was said.

They saw the pow-wow that took place, but of course could not hear what was said, since the Indians spoke in low tones.

But when the crowd surrounded the doomed boy and the chief and Red Robinson began talking, the words came to their ears quite plainly.

It was quite a surprise to them when they noticed that the Indian called Little Buck seemed to hesitate when Jumping Dog told him to set fire to the brush pile.

"Ther redskin don't seem ter want ter do it, Jim," the scout observed, as he made ready to slip over the brink of the cliff and slide down the rope. "I reckon it's about time I got down, anyhow, 'cause if he don't do it, some one else will."

"That's right, Charlie," Dart answered. "Go ahead. As soon as I see you land safely I will come down."

"I reckon it's better for me ter slide down than to be lowered by you, so here goes."

So saying, Cheyenne Charlie swung himself over the edge of the cliff and then lowered himself gradually to the ground below.

Rifle in hand, Jim watched until he landed safely.

If any of the Indians had seen Charlie and started for him he meant to open fire and do his best to exterminate as many as possible.

But nothing of the kind happened.

The attention of every Creek in the camp was riveted to the boy and the pile of dry brush that surrounded him.

They were all eager to see the fire started and then witness the agonies of their prisoner as he was burned to death.

Charlie looked up and beckoned for Jim to come on when he realized that he was safe for the time being.

The boy then lost no time in swinging himself over the cliff, and then down he came, as rapidly as it was advisable.

It was at that very moment that Little Buck stepped forward and applied the flaming brand to the inflammable pile that was about Young Wild West.

As it kindled into a blaze, Charlie raised his revolver and took a step forward.

"Come on, Jim," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "I'm goin' ter shoot, an' you kin bet your life that ther chief will be ther first ter go down."

Then it was that something happened that surprised them not a little.

They suddenly saw that Wild was free.

Who had done it they did not know, but they guessed that the Indian who had applied the torch to the brush was responsible for it.

Cheyenne Charlie bounded forward with the speed of a deer, and his revolver cracked three times in succession.

As has been stated, three of the Creeks fell, and one of them was Jumping Dog, the chief.

The scout gave utterance to his yell as he turned and ran toward the exit of the hollow.

He knew Wild was free, and he wanted to let him know in which way to run.

But before the young deadshot saw they they had got behind a big rock and were standing with their rifles, ready to shoot down the first who offered to touch our hero.

"Come on, Wild," Jim shouted. "We'll shoot the first redskin who tries to stop you."

But Wild was already running toward them, and almost before the Creeks were aware of it he had succeeded in getting behind the rock.

There was a distance of probably a hundred feet to the place where they must get out of the dangerous spot.

But there were other rocks to shield them from the bullets of the redskins, so the moment Wild got with them he called out:

"This way, boys! I reckon they are not going to burn me alive this morning. Maybe there are some redskins who will do it some time in the future, but you can bet all you're worth that it is not going to happen now."

Meanwhile, the Creeks were yelling fiercely, and Red Robinson was doing his best to make them run after the prisoner and his partners.

He took care himself to keep in the background, and it was well he did so, for Cheyenne Charlie was waiting for the chance to draw a bead on him.

Like a swarm of bees, the redskins finally started for the rock behind which the three had taken their position.

"Give it to them, boys!" said Wild, as he seized a revolver from Jim's belt.

Crang! crang! crang! crang!

Charlie and Jim each fired two shots with their rifles, and then Wild emptied the chambers of the revolver into the ranks of the advancing Creeks.

This put a check to them, as might be supposed, and taking advantage of it, the three darted from behind the rock and succeeded in reaching another that was within twenty feet of the outlet.

They paused there, and were just in time to escape a volley that was fired at them.

But a dozen or more of the redskins came pushing toward them, regardless of the fact that they knew they were literally rushing to their death.

The rifles cracked again, and two or three fell.

Then one waved his hands excitedly and came bounding toward them.

Wild was just in time to check Charlie from shooting him down, for he recognized the indian as Little Buck.

"Not him, Charlie!" he said, sharply. "He cut me loose after setting fire to the brushwood."

"Jest as you say, Wild," was the reply, "but yer spoke jest in time."

A volley was fired at them, and the bullets must have come pretty close to the fleeing Indian.

But none of them hit him, and on he came until he was safe behind the rock.

"Little Buck will go with you, Young Wild West," he said, hoarsely.

"All right," was the reply. "You are welcome, for you have shown that there is some good in you, after all, and I will see to it that you will escape punishment for having joined in the rebellion with your people."

"Young Wild West is a great brave. Little Buck is glad of what he did."

"Don't say any more about it, Little Buck. We haven't time now to talk it over. But let's get out of here."

More of the redskins now came rushing that way, firing rapidly with their rifles and revolvers.

But the bullets merely flattened against the rock, or went over it.

Charlie and Jim once more began pumping hot lead at them and again their progress was stayed.

Taking advantage of this repulse, Wild called out for them to follow him, and then as he fired a shot with his revolver into the midst of the demoralized crowd, he bounded for the outlet of the hollow.

The others were close at his heels, and though more than a dozen shots were fired at them, they all escaped being hit.

Once out of range of the bullets of the Indians they felt comparatively safe.

But they knew that they would be pursued, so they ran on as fast as they could make their way over the rough and uneven ground.

It was then that Little Buck showed up to great advantage.

"Come this way," he said, as he pointed to the right. "They will not catch us."

Up a sort of natural stairway among the rocks he darted and, unhesitatingly, Wild and his parents went after him.

Overhanging vines were met by them, but they were pushed aside, and on they went until they were at the top of the high ground.

Meanwhile, Jumping Dog's warriors were rushing on down the gully, for they evidently thought the fugitives had gone that way.

Little Buck smiled when he saw this, and with a nod of satisfaction he said to his companions:

"We must go and find the soldiers very quick. Pretty soon they will come with the horses and then maybe they catch us."

"Well, I reckon we've got horses putty close by," the scout retorted, with a grim smile, and turning to Wild, he added: "Spitfire is here, too."

"Good!" the young deadshot exclaimed. "I am glad you were thoughtful enough to fetch him along."

"Well, he seemed to want to come, so we couldn't leave him behind," Jim spoke up.

"Let us get to them as soon as possible, then."

Charlie and Jim had not forgotten where they had left their horses, so they hurried along, and while the Indians were yelling close at hand, they came upon them.

"You get on with me, Little Buck," Wild said, as he pointed to the sorrel stallion who was tied to the tree where his partners had left him.

Then he quickly cut the rope that held the horse fast and mounted, Little Buck getting on behind.

Charlie and Jim were in the saddle in a jiffy, and then away they went over the back trail.

"They will never catch us now," said Wild, as a smile showed on his handsome face, when he looked over his shoulder. "Let them come. We will lead them straight to the cavalrymen, and then I reckon the round-up will take place."

On went the three horses, Spitfire carrying his double burden with comparative ease.

As they were ascending a rather long rise they looked back and saw a number of the redskins in hot pursuit.

Some of them had mounted their ponies, and seemed bent on overtaking the fugitives.

They were fully a quarter of a mile away, but that made no difference to the scout, and placing his rifle to his shoulder, he took a steady aim and pulled the trigger.

Crang!

As the report rang out one of the Creeks threw up his arms and fell from his horse.

"There goes another, Wild," he said, grimly. "I reckon if I only had time I'd pick off every one of 'em."

An expression of sadness crossed the face of the Creek who had befriended our hero.

"Too much shoot," he said, shaking his head. "The Creeks make a very bad mistake. They want to fight the palefaces, but they no can whip them."

"Well, they can have their way once in awhile when they strike out on the warpath," Wild answered, "but in the long run they always get the worst of it. I am sorry that you got into such bad company, Little Buck."

"I am sorry, too," was the reply. "I will never do it again."

"Well, never mind. I reckon we'll see to it that you come out in this all right. I promised the colonel in charge of the cavalrymen to help round up the Creeks who were making so much trouble. I know quite well that the rascally white man, called Red Robinson, is largely responsible for it all, and when we have corralled them you can bet that he will have to take his medicine."

"Red Robinson very bad man," declared the Creek, shrugging his shoulders. "He got plenty brains, and he made Jumping Dog think that he could kill all the palefaces, the soldiers and all."

"Well, I reckon they won't kill many more palefaces. No doubt they have done considerable of it since they left the reservation, but before sunset to-night they will be corralled, and then the big time they have been having will come to an end."

They kept on riding, and mile after mile was covered.

The sounds of the pursuit had long since died out, which told that the Indians had either given it up, or else that their horses had failed them.

After what seemed to be a long while they came in sight of

the cavalymen as they were rounding the side of a cliff on a ledge.

Cheyenne Charlie waved his hat, and then a faint cheer went up, which was heard quite plainly.

Two minutes later Young Wild West and his companions halted on a level stretch and waited for Colonel Merry and his men to come up.

When they did so the colonel took off his hat and led his men in a cheer.

"So they found you, eh, Young Wild West?" he called out, as he rode forward and gripped the hand of the young dead-shot.

"Yes, and they got me just in the nick of time, too, colonel," was the reply. "The redskins had me tied to a tree and were about to burn me alive. But I was sure they would never do it, for I knew my partners would not fail me. This Indian is largely responsible for my being here, for it was he who severed the bonds that held me to a tree."

"Ah! I was wondering what he was doing with you," and the colonel turned his gaze upon Little Buck, who was sitting with folded arms, his eyes turned toward the ground.

He waited until Wild dismounted, and then did likewise.

Then he started to tell of the big mistake he had made, and how sorry he was for it.

The colonel turned to the captain and said:

"Well, I suppose we will have to take him a prisoner."

"That is for you to say, colonel," was the reply. "You are in command."

"Well, I reckon you need not bother about doing anything like that, Colonel Merry," our hero spoke up. "I will stand responsible for Little Buck. He is my prisoner, if he is a prisoner at all."

The colonel gave a nod, and all the cavalymen seemed to be satisfied with the arrangement.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERIL OF THE GIRLS.

When the long night had passed and Arietta found that Young Wild West had not returned she began to grow very uneasy.

The two men who had been left to guard the camp seemed to think nothing strange of it, but the girl told them that unless the Creeks had succeeded in making their escape they surely ought to be back by this time.

Finally she went to them and said:

"Don't you think it would be advisable to break camp and follow the trail?"

"No, miss," one of them answered. "Our orders from the colonel are to stay right here until he comes back."

"Well, you can obey the colonel's orders, then, but we are going to take the trail just as soon as we have eaten our breakfast."

The cavalymen looked at her in admiration, as well as surprise, for they could tell by the way the girl spoke that she meant what she said.

Arietta said no more, but went back to the camp and told Wing Wah to hurry along with the breakfast.

The Chinaman had already kindled a fire and the coffee was beginning to boil.

"You seem to be in a hurry to eat this morning, Arietta," Eloise said, looking at the girl in surprise.

"I am," was the reply. "It is not because I am hungry, though, for we are going to leave here just as soon as the breakfast is finished."

"Leave here!" and Eloise and the scout's wife spoke as if in one voice, showing their astonishment at what the girl said.

"Yes, I can't help thinking that something is wrong, and that makes me feel as though we must follow the trail. Hop, you can begin taking down the tents and loading the pack-horses."

Anna and Eloise protested mildly, but it was of no use.

They knew pretty well that when Wild and his partners were away Arietta was the leader, so they gave in to her gracefully.

The cook hurried the breakfast along, and the girls were not long in eating it.

Then they assisted the two Chinamen to finish the loading of the pack-horses, and in due time were ready to set out.

The two cavalymen had said nothing up to this time, but they now came forward and told Arietta they thought she was making a mistake.

"The colonel and the boys will be back before long," one

of them declared. "You might just as well stay here. Another thing, suppose the redskins have got scattered around, and you should run across a party of them?"

"Well, we will take our chances on that," Young Wild West's sweetheart answered, with a smile. "If we do run across a few bad Indians it will not be the first time we have done so."

"You are a wonderful girl," one of them declared, shaking his head as he walked away.

Mounting her cream-white broncho, Arietta waited until she saw that the Chinamen were ready to leave, and then she set out in the direction Wild and the rest had taken the night before.

In the daylight it was quite easy to follow the trail, and they kept on until they finally came to the spot where the halt had been made while Wild and Charlie went ahead to spy upon the redskins.

Arietta saw at a glance that the Creeks had been there, but had fled.

Then she looked the ground over, and struck the trail of the cavalymen again.

After that it grew rather monotonous, for they saw nothing of those they were searching for, nor did any Indians show up.

They kept on until noon, and then a halt was called, and after an hour's rest the girls again set out.

Hop and Wing seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the idea of following the trail, and Anna and Eloise had become convinced that Arietta was perfectly right in acting the way she had done.

"It must be that the Creeks fled and that they are following them," Anna said, shaking her head.

"That's right, Anna," Arietta nodded. "Nothing else would keep them away so long. But perhaps we will meet them coming up, for I know very well that if they have got close enough to the redskins they have corralled the whole lot of them before this."

"If they have got away it is due to the cleverness of that villain called Red Robinson," Eloise remarked.

"No doubt of it," Arietta answered.

"Me likee ketchee Led Robinson, so be. Me allee samee blowee uppee with um big fireclacker," Hop observed, a bland smile showing on his yellow face.

"Well, perhaps you will have a chance to blow him or some of the Indians up before we get through, Hop," Arietta retorted, with a smile.

They rode along, keeping up a good pace, until about the middle of the afternoon, when they came to the point where Wild and his partners had met the cavalymen after our hero's escape from the redskins.

Arietta dismounted and looked the ground over carefully.

She was clever enough to know just about what had happened, so turning to her companions, she observed:

"It seems that two or three horses went on ahead, and then they returned after a while and met the colonel and his men. That means that Wild and probably both Charlie and Jim were the ones who rode on to scout for the redskins. I can see the tracks quite plainly, and I am satisfied that they took the cavalymen back with them. Now, then, all we have to do is to follow the trail, and I think before sunset we will come upon them."

They rode on again, and a little later they came to the hollow where the Indians had been camped over night.

The place was deserted now, but the evidences of them having been there were convincing enough to let the girls know that they had escaped once more, and that they were being pursued by Wild.

"It seems to me that they should have rounded them up by this time," Arietta said, shaking her head. "But maybe they have pretty good horses and they may have got a good start again. But we will find out very soon, I think."

Riding out of the hollow, the girls took the trail on the higher ground above, and then along the mountainside they went, keeping their eyes and ears open, for they all felt that they were getting nearer to those they were searching for every minute.

It was about an hour before sunset when, as the little party rounded an angle of a high cliff, they came upon a party of seven painted Creeks.

It was evident that the redskins had seen them coming, for before the girls could put up much of a fight they sprang upon them and made them prisoners.

Hop was the only lucky one of the lot, for he happened to be well in the rear at the time, and leaping from the back of his horse he darted among some rocks and hid himself from view.

Anna and Eloise screamed for help, but Arietta succeeded in firing a couple of shots, one of them dropping an Indian dead, and the other wounding one slightly before she was rendered helpless.

It happened that the small party of Creeks who had captured the girls in such an unexpected manner had left the main party of the redskins when the hollow was abandoned.

Whether this was because they had been left too far in the rear, or that they had decided to go it alone, cannot be said.

But, anyhow, after making a wide circuit they had come back to the trail of the cavalymen.

The redskins were elated at what they considered a very fortunate occurrence.

But they did not grow very demonstrative about it, and kept their voices at a low pitch.

Arietta, who had recovered quickly from the surprise, noticed this and it occurred to her that the Indians must have thought that their enemies were somewhere near at hand.

There were really only five of them to handle the prisoners, since the wounded one had a bullet in his right arm and could do little or nothing.

He was very angry, and glared at Arietta savagely as the girl was led to her horse, her hands tied behind her.

"You don't like it because I shot you, I suppose," she said, looking at him defiantly. "I only wish the bullet had found your heart instead of hitting you on the arm. But you wait a little while longer and you will get a bullet where it will do the most good."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Creek, who seemed to be a sort of leader. "Paleface maiden will be Lone Panther's squaw. She very smart, but she soon find out."

The others nodded their approval at this, while Anna and Eloise grew very nervous and screamed.

Wing had been bound hand and foot, and he was left lying upon the ground, for it seemed that the redskins did not care anything about him.

It must have been that they had not noticed Hop at all, for they did not offer to make a search for him.

It happened that Wing was leading both pack-horses at the time.

Hop was in the rear, as has been stated, and he had dropped back in order to arrange the saddle-girths.

When he crept away and concealed himself among the rocks the broncho he had been riding took the opportunity to walk over to a spot where the grass showed up in profusion.

It was a lucky thing for the clever Chinese that the animal did this, for the broncho became concealed from the view of the redskins, and when they got ready to set out with their prisoners they simply took the pack-horses and Wing's steed with them, leaving Wing lying upon the ground, bound hand and foot with buckskin thongs.

Hop lay very still until he heard them taking their departure, and then he crept around so he could peer from behind the rock.

He was just in time to see the redskins riding away with their prisoners, the dead one hanging over the back of a horse and tied securely.

"Lat velly muchee bad," he declared, shaking his head. "Um ledskins allee samee gittee um girls. Maybe ley killee my blother, for me no see him, so be. But me velly smartee Chinees. Me ketchee pretty soonee."

He waited until the party was out of sight, and then he left the group of rocks and went in search of his horse.

The animal was nibbling away at the luxuriant grass in a contented manner, and Hop had no difficulty whatever in catching it.

Then he started forward, leading his horse, and soon came upon his brother, who was lying prostrate upon the ground, and almost frightened out of his wits.

"Whattée mattee, Wing?" he asked, a grin coming on his face, for it seemed that he always enjoyed seeing his brother in misery.

"Cuttee me loose, my blother," Wing answered, faintly, while his face lighted up with joy. "Um bad ledskins go away and takee um girls, so be."

"Lat light. Me knowee lat. Me thlinkee maybe ley killee you, so be, but you allee light, Wing. Pletty soonee me cuttee you loose."

"Hully uppee," pleaded the cook as he made a desperate struggle to free himself, but only succeeded in turning over upon his face.

Hop grinned again, but quickly drew his hunting-knife and liberated his brother.

"Whattée you do now, my blother?" Wing asked, for he was one of the sort who never could form an idea of what was the best thing to do in case of a serious difficulty presenting itself.

"Me go savee um girls," Hop answered, as he threw out his chest and acted very much as though there was no doubt of his being able to do so. "Me lide and you walkee. You um fool Chinees. You no fightee, but me fightee allee samee likee Young Wild West. Me velly smartee Chinees."

"Me no wantee walkee, my blother," protested Wing, as he saw Hop about to mount his broncho.

"Allee light, maybe you lide, too, len. You gittee uppee behind me and lookee outtee you no fallée off, so be, you fool Chinees."

The broncho was quite capable of carrying the two so long as he was not exerted too much, and soon they were riding along, following the trail of the redskins, which diverged from the one the cavalymen had made, and ran off to the right.

Both Chinamen were armed, but it was very seldom that they ever did any shooting, except that Hop used the old-fashioned revolver he carried for the purpose of scaring people sometimes, and also when he was in a funny mood and wanted to amuse some one.

He hardly ever had the weapon loaded with anything more than colored fire.

But now as he rode along he forced bullets into the six chambers, and imbedded them there firmly by means of the lever that was attached to the weapon.

Wing drew an ordinary revolver and held it in his hand, while the expression that came over his face showed that he was desperate, and would do the best he could to save the girls.

They both knew that the redskins could not be very far ahead of them, so they put the broncho to a faster pace, and after riding along for nearly two miles they reached the end of the timber patch and came to a broken country, where the rocks and patches of vegetation were strewn about in wild disorder.

It was not until they reached the top of a hill that they caught sight of those they were following.

The redskins were about two miles ahead, and were still heading off to the right, toward a rather wide stream of water that glimmered in the light of the sinking sun.

Thinking that they might be observed by the redskins, they remained in a secluded place until they saw the little party disappear over a ridge.

Then they mounted again and set out along the trail.

By the time they got within a mile of the river the sun was pretty close to the line of the western horizon.

Hop thought for a moment as he looked at it, and then decided to go ahead and act while it was yet daylight.

He felt that the Creeks would halt on the bank of the stream with their prisoners, and if they did he was going to give them a scare that would enable him to release the girls before they would be aware of it.

On they rode, the broncho keeping up nobly under the double burden, and swinging off a little to the south they reached a strip of cottonwoods, Hop feeling satisfied that they had not been observed.

"Now, len," he said, as he dismounted, "we go save um girls. Me makee velly biggee fireclacker go bang, and len we shootee velly muchee quicke."

Wing seemed to be resigned to it, so he gave a nod, and then the two at once started ahead on foot, picking their way as carefully as they could through the undergrowth and keeping close to the bank of the river.

It was not very far that they went before they heard guttural voices, and the next minute they were peering through the bushes at the six redskins and their prisoners.

Hop turned to Wing more earnestly than he had ever done in his life before.

No doubt he realized that the supreme moment had arrived, and that it all depended upon them to save the girls.

"Wing," he whispered, "you be velly sure lat you shootee stlaight, but no hittee um girls. Gittee velly muchee close, and len pullee um tigger. Shootee allee timee, but be sure you hittee um ledskins."

Wing nodded and gripped the butt of his revolver tightly.

The girls had been removed from their horses, and were sitting on the ground, their hands still tied behind them.

Anna and Eloise looked much dejected, but Hop could see that there was a hopeful gleam in the eyes of Young Wild West's sweetheart.

He nodded approvingly, but made no comment.

From one of the many pockets his loose-fitting blouse contained he drew forth a large cracker that had been manufactured by his own hands.

The spot where he was crouching with his brother was probably twenty feet distant from where the Indians had halted, and after he had moved slightly so he would have a good chance to throw the cracker, he struck a sulphur match and lighted the fuse.

Then he shot a glance at his brother which meant for him to be ready to follow him, and taking a good aim he hurled the explosive right into the midst of the Creeks, who happened to be standing close together at the time.

The missile hit one of them on the arm, but before it struck the ground it exploded with a loud report.

Terrified yells went up as the red fiends ran in every direction.

"Hip hi! Hoolay!" shouted Hop, and then he dashed forward, revolver in hand.

Bang!

He was so close to one of the redskins that the bullet took effect and down he went.

Crack! crack! crack! crack!

Wing was firing away, blindly, but it seemed that one of his bullets took effect, too and in spite of the smoke Hop saw that four of the Creeks were lying upon the ground.

As he turned toward the spot where he had seen the girls a scream sounded and he instantly recognized it as coming from Arietta.

There was a splash in the water and then he knew that a horse was crossing the stream.

"Hip hi! Whattee mattee?" he shouted.

Then a redskin suddenly confronted him, a rifle in his hand, ready to fire.

Bang!

Hop discharged his revolver without taking aim, and by good luck the bullet found its way to the Indian's heart.

It happened that this Creek was the one Arietta had wounded, and if it had not been that his right arm was useless, he might have killed the Chinaman.

But as it was, he perished, as he no doubt deserved.

Wing, who had plucked up sufficient courage, had already reached the spot where the girls were.

But he found that Arietta was missing.

Anna and Eloise were terrified, for when the cracker exploded it had given them as much a surprise as the Indians had received.

The cook quickly cut them loose with his knife, and as Hop came dashing up, Anna was trying to tell how one of the braves had seized Arietta and placed her upon the back of a horse immediately after the explosion occurred.

By this time the smoke had cleared sufficiently for them to see across the river, which was quite narrow and shallow at that point.

Riding away, almost a hundred yards distant, was the Creek brave, holding Arietta on his pony before him.

Hop quickly picked up a rifle that lay upon the ground and handing it to Anna, said:

"Shootee um horse!"

"No, no!" she protested. "I am afraid to fire, for I might kill Arietta."

"You shootee!" and the Chinaman tendered the weapon to Eloise.

But she, too, declared she was afraid to.

Hop shook his head, sadly.

"Me no shootee stlaight, so be," he said. "Me havee ketchee um ledksins."

Then he picked out the first horse he came to and, mounting, proceeded to cross the stream, leaving Anna and Eloise and his brother on the bank, looking after him helplessly.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUNDING UP THE REDSKINS.

Young Wild West knew that Jumping Dog, the chief of the rebellious Creeks, was dead, but Red Robinson, the real leader, was still alive.

This meant that the task of rounding up the redskins was just as hard as it had been before.

When he had talked it over with Colonel Merry for a few minutes it was decided that they should lose no time in getting after the Creeks and their rascally white leader.

"You said you would corral them, Wild," the colonel retorted, "and I believe you will keep your word. We haven't anything in the way of a corral at hand to put them in, but

when they have been gathered in they will be corraled all right."

"Or rounded up, just as you want to call it," our hero answered, with a smile.

The young deadshot had lost his weapons, but he was quickly furnished with a good rifle, and then he felt that he was again ready to cope with his redskin foes.

The march was resumed by the cavalry and in a reasonable length of time they reached the hollow where our hero's thrilling escape had occurred.

But the Creeks had gone!

The hollow was deserted.

Wild had expected this, so he was not the least discomfited.

The trail led on up the mountain for five or six miles, and then it turned off to the right toward a long stretch of forest land.

On they rode, having no difficulty to follow it, though they sometimes saw evidences of it being covered.

At noon they halted, but only long enough to eat something and give their horses a rest.

Then they continued on, and in less than two hours they came to a ravine, where the tracks of the redskins' horses looked to be very fresh.

"Boys, we must look out for an ambush," the young deadshot said, as he brought his sorrel stallion to a halt and turned to his partners. "I reckon it would be a good idea to halt right here, and then do a little scouting before we do anything further."

"Right yer are, Wild," Cheyenne Charlie answered, nodding his head.

Jim was willing, as might be supposed, and so was the colonel, for he did not want to lead his brave band of fighters into a redskin ambush.

They all dismounted, and then Wild called for the scout to follow him.

The two climbed to the higher ground, and then our hero lost no time in ascending a tree.

As the boy looked down he gave a nod of satisfaction, for less than half a mile from him he saw the redskins.

They had dismounted and were standing and sitting along either side of the ravine behind rocks and bushes.

He remained in the tree long enough to locate well the spot, and then he descended and told Charlie.

"Good!" the latter exclaimed. "I reckon it's about time we got 'em. We've been a long while gittin' up with 'em."

Back the two went, and they soon joined Jim and the cavalry.

Wild explained just what he wanted done, and the colonel agreed, thoroughly, with him.

The result was that Jim Dart assumed charge of ten men, accompanied by the captain, and went to the top of the cliff on foot.

The rest mounted and, with Wild ready to lead them, they waited until the firing began.

It seemed much longer than it really was before a volley sounded from the top of the high ground on the right of the ravine.

But the moment he heard the shots, Young Wild West called out:

"Forward, boys! We want to take as many alive as we can. Red Robinson must not be shot, anyhow. We must let him be taken to the post and get his medicine, after a court-martial is held."

Away they rode through the ravine, and two minutes later they broke upon the Indians, who were running about in wild dismay, unable to get sight at those who had opened fire on them from above.

Wild spotted Red Robinson, and he at once got his lariat ready.

Only a few shots were fired by the surprised Creeks, and then they cried for quarter and threw down their guns.

Red Robinson had started to run straight up the ravine.

There was a gleam of triumph in the eyes of our hero as he rode after him, swinging his lariat.

He knew he had him, and he meant to wait until he could make a sure throw.

Rapidly Snitfire gained.

Suddenly the renegade turned and raised a revolver.

Crack!

It was Wild who fired, for he was expecting such a move.

The bullet struck Robinson in the fleshy part of the arm and the weapon fell from his hand.

Whizz!

Before he hardly knew it, Young Wild West's lariat whirled through the air and down came the noose over his head and shoulders.

A quick jerk, as the sorrel stopped short in his tracks, and Red Robinson was rolling upon the ground.

"I reckon I've got you, you sneaking scoundrel!" the boy exclaimed, as he dismounted and ran to him, still keeping the lariat taut. "I knew it could not last a great deal longer."

Red Robinson made no reply.

The sudden jerk he had received took the breath from his body, and gasping and kicking, he lay upon the ground.

Wild pounced upon him in a jiffy and took the revolver that hung from the left side of his belt.

Then he took possession of the hunting knife, and gave a pull upon the rope and exclaimed:

"Get up, Red Robinson! You're all right now, so don't try to play possum."

Without a word, the villain obeyed.

Colonel Merry now came galloping to the spot.

"Here he is, colonel!" the young deadshot called out. "I reckon the round-up is complete. Now, then, to get them into the corral. Here is the real leader of the rascally band of Creeks. A fit subject for hanging, I think."

"He certainly is," was the reply. "But he shall be tried in strict accordance with the law."

It did not take Wild long to bind the villain securely.

By the time Jim and the rest of the cavalymen had got down into the ravine the dead had been counted up, the number being twenty-seven.

Though the redskins were sullen, they seemed to be glad that they had not put up a stronger fight when they saw the cavalymen riding about before them.

It took quite a little time to get the arrangements made to take the prisoners away, and when they were finally ready they set out through the ravine.

"Now, then, Charlie," our hero said, as they got to the top of a hill, "have you any idea which is the right direction to go back to the camp?"

"I think I have, Wild," was the reply. "As near as I kin judge, it's right to ther northeast of here."

"Well, we may as well make a short cut, then."

"That's jest what I was thinkin' of, Wild."

The march then was taken up and they proceeded on in the direction our hero and his partners thought would take them back to the camp by a shorter cut.

Just before sunset, as they were riding along the bank of a stream, Wild suddenly caught sight of a galloping horse over a mile away.

Straight across an almost level stretch the animal was going, and as the boy took a good look he gave vent to a cry of surprise.

The horse was bearing a double burden.

The flutter of a dress attracted his attention, too, and turning to his partners, he exclaimed:

"Boys, there is something wrong! That looks like a redskin carrying off a girl. I reckon we had better see about it."

The Indian, for such he was, was riding almost parallel with the river bank, and he did not see the cavalymen until they halted at the bank.

As the reader no doubt supposes, it was Arietta he had on the broncho with him.

Wild had not gone more than half a mile before he recognized her, and then his eyes flashed and he fingered the trigger of his rifle.

But it occurred to him that he had better not take any such chance, so he slung the weapon over his shoulder and then galloped on.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw that Charlie and Jim were more than a hundred yards behind him.

But he did not mind this. He felt quite equal to rescuing his sweetheart alone.

Meanwhile, the redskin was trying to urge his tired steed to a faster gait, but with the double burden the poor beast was working hard.

Toward a low ridge he was making, where a few trees were scattered.

Wild turned so he would be able to cut him off, and gained rapidly.

In less than five minutes he was so close to him that he could easily have shot the redskin without running the risk of harming his sweetheart.

But he refrained from doing so.

His lariat was ready, and he meant to catch the horse, if possible, without throwing it.

As the redskin reached the top of the ridge he turned and waved his hand mockingly at the young deadshot, who was then not more than three hundred feet behind him.

Wild did not know what this meant, but when he reached the top of the hill his face turned pale.

Not far distant was the brink of a chasm, and straight toward it the redskin was going, as though he meant to ride over it and be dashed to death himself, in order to thwart the daring young paleface.

The boy's rifle was still slung over his shoulder, and his lariat was in his hand.

He thought quickly. If he could succeed in throwing the noose over Arietta and the redskin, she would be saved.

But there was really no other thing to do just then, and he began swinging the rope.

The redskin yelled defiantly and rode for the brink of the chasm.

Then Wild let go his lariat.

The noose dropped over the heads of Arietta and her captor in the nick of time.

It was a fortunate thing for the girl that the Indian was under her when she fell.

As it was, the breath was nearly jarred from her body, and helpless as she was she had no chance to make an effort to lighten her fall.

The horse the two had been riding had been unable to check itself, and over it went to the sharp rocks, a hundred feet below, uttering a scream that was almost human as it disappeared from view.

"Oh, Wild!" the girl exclaimed, as her dashing young lover lifted her from the ground and quickly cut the rope that held her hands tied behind her. "I am so glad!"

"You are not any more glad than I am, Et," was the fervent reply. I thought for a moment it was all up with you. I had my rope ready, and my rifle was slung over my shoulder. There was only one thing to do. I had to rope you."

Wild saw the Indian about to get upon his feet, so he gently allowed his sweetheart to drop to the ground and pounced upon him.

A blow from the butt of his revolver rendered the Creek unconscious, and then it was as easy matter to bind him and wait for Charlie and Jim to come up.

When they finally arrived they were astounded when they saw the danger that Arietta must have been in.

But it was quickly talked over and the girl was not long in recovering, and then with the prisoner on Charlie's horse, and Arietta riding with Wild, they started back to the river to join the cavalry.

It was just then that Hop Wah came riding into view, yelling like a wild man.

When he reached them he quickly told the part he and his brother had played after the girls had been captured by the few redskins.

This was somewhat surprising to our hero and his partners, for they had never known of the two Chinamen doing such a thing before.

They all went to the spot, and found the dead Creeks and the two girls, and then they were compelled to believe Hop's story.

But even then they must have believed it, anyway, for Anna and Eloise bore it out strictly.

They remained in camp there until the next morning, and then with the prisoners they set out and in due time arrived at the camp.

Young Wild West and his friends decided to accompany the cavalymen to the post, and when they finally arrived there they had the satisfaction of seeing the redskins placed where they could not get away until they had been duly tried for the crimes they had committed since they had started on the warpath.

Right here we may as well state that Red Robinson was court-martialed and sentenced to be shot and was duly executed.

Little Buck, the redskin who had befriended our hero, received a full pardon, and our friends believed him when he promised that he would never again violate the laws that were set down by the white men.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S WARNING; OR, THE SECRET BAND OF THE GULCH."

CURRENT NEWS

The smallest will ever recorded in the Surrogate's office is said to be that of James L. Doyle of No. 1017 Intervale avenue, the Bronx, whose will has just been filed. The value of the estate is \$5.10 and it is left to his two daughters.

While Consul, the trained monkey, was doing his bicycle act at the Temple Theatre, Grand Rapids, Mich., recently, Prince, the prize winning bulldog of the playhouse spied him and before the dog could be stopped he had nearly torn the simian's arm off. The animal is in a hospital.

Billy Sunday, the evangelist who used to be a baseball player, has just published a pamphlet showing the cost of saving souls in various cities, and says it takes \$545 to save a sinner in New York City. This is more than Chicago, but not so much as in Indianapolis, where the average is \$620. Other figures are: Atlanta, \$75; New Orleans, \$75; Chicago, \$395; Boston, \$450.

Major Armando Andre, editor of "El Dia," and Dr. Manuel Mencia, director of customs, fought a duel with sabres at Havana, Cuba, recently, Dr. Mencia being severely wounded. Mencia challenged Andre on account of attacks in "El Dia" charging him with the commission of gross frauds in the management of the custom house.

At Dublin, Ireland recently, a large crowd witnessed a ten-mile race on a grass track between Michael Horan's trotting mare, Kathleen, and P. Fagan, the pedestrian. Fagan received 18 minutes allowance and covered three miles one furlong in that time. He was caught 700 yards from the tape and beaten by 300 yards in 53 minutes 58 seconds.

The battleship Oregon, which has been at the Puget Sound Navy Yard six months undergoing reconstructing, has just left to join the Pacific fleet at Los Angeles for inspection. While at Los Angeles the famous old battleship will undergo exhaustive tests to ascertain her effectiveness for war duty, especially her new fire control system, wireless apparatus, and other modern equipment.

On a wet and muddy field, making the handling of the ball almost impossible, the Army defeated University of Vermont at West Point recently by a score of 12 to 0. The soldiers played an open game, and the dodging of Milburn and Hobbs through broken fields was a feature of the game, and gives promise of some spectacular work by these men on dry fields later in the season.

George A. Burns, the oldest track walker in point of service on the Pennsylvania Railroad, has just put his 177,900th mile behind him. In keeping vigil over the track in his care he has walked the equivalent of seven and one-third times around the world in the last thirty-five years. Journeying four times a day between Greensburg, Pa., and Youngwood yard, a distance of 3.53 miles, he has inspected 5,725,800 splice plates on half that many rail joints.

The Gulf Refining Company has just purchased a large parcel of land abutting the New Haven road, and is to erect a plant for the distribution of its product. A general oil trade is to be built up in competition with the Standard Oil Company in Connecticut, and eventually in Massachusetts. The company recently began to equip a large plant at Naugatuck Junction. The oils are to be shipped there from Bayonne, N. J.

Harold Hight, a guide, mistaken for a deer in the woods near the base of Mosquito Mountain, Maine, was shot and killed by Dr. Brooks a physician of New York, recently. The two started from a sporting camp near Lake Moxie in search of deer, with the understanding that if either saw an animal he was to whistle to the other. Dr. Brooks thought he saw a deer, and whistled. When he got no answering whistle, he fired, he says. The bullet struck the guide in the back of the neck. Dr. Brooks notified the camp, three miles distant of the accident. A party immediately set out, but the physician was unable to guide them to the place, and although fifty men beat about in the woods for four hours, they could not discover the guide's body. No action has been taken against Dr. Brooks.

Policeman Mulholland saw William Young, 11 years old, wearily pedalling a bicycle through 125th street, New York, the other night. In front of him on the handle bars shivered seven-year-old Henry Krone. The boys looked so thoroughly unhappy and cold that the cop after a talk with them took them to the 125th street station. There the young boy, who said his father was Henry B. Young of Grand avenue, Hackensack, told the police that he and Henry were playing in front of their home after school closed and that Henry suggested a ride on the wheel to city delights.

They came across on the Fort Lee ferry and spent their money for candy. Then they got tired and wanted to go home, but their funds were gone and altogether they had not had a nice time. Mr. Young at the request of the police, came over from New Jersey at midnight and took his son home in an automobile.

Italy's third super-Dreadnought, the Leonardo da Vinci, has just been launched. The Leonardo da Vinci, which is a sister ship of the Conte da Cavour and the Giulio Cesare, has a displacement of 21,500 tons. Her length over all is 575½ feet, beam 91½ feet and mean draft 27½ feet. The vessel will carry thirteen 12-inch guns, triple mounted, and five barbettes. Her second battery, to stand off torpedo attack, will be made up of eighteen 4.7-inch pieces. The engines of the Leonardo da Vinci are of 24,000 horsepower and are expected to attain a trial speed of 22.5 knots.

A nugget of pure gold as large as an extra early sifted June pea has caused all the millionaires who have country estates in the San Mateo foothills to sit up and take notice. The gold nugget was found by Mrs. John Tibbet of Redwood City, Cal., in the gullet of a duck that had sharpened its appetite on sand carted to a poultry yard from the dried bed of San Carlos Creek in the recent drought. The gravel was taken from where the creek passes through the country estate of Col. N. J. Brittan, a San Francisco capitalist. During the summer months the stream is bare and many loads of gravel are extracted, but the presence of gold was never before suspected. Everybody is now looking for gold-bearing ducks.

The Rev. Horace D. Ferris, now pastor of a church in North Salem, N. Y., and twenty years ago in charge of a congregation at Quogue, L. I., has just received a fee of \$20 for a wedding that he performed at Quogue twenty years ago. The couple whom he married are now living in Manhattan. At the time of the marriage the bridegroom said he was short of funds and asked the minister to wait for his fee, promising to send it as soon as he could. Mr. Ferris forgot all about the wedding long ago. He was astonished a few days ago to receive a check for \$20 accompanied by a letter expressing the writer's regret at having kept him waiting so long. It was only by consulting his old records that the clergyman was able to recall the ceremony.

Postmaster Edmund A. Voorhees of New York City has notified the public that the new Postal Savings Banks in this borough are open from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. Saturdays. "These banks supply what working folk long have needed," he said recently. "The average bank closes at 12 o'clock Saturdays, so the working man has no opportunity to place his money in the banks, for as a rule he is not paid until the banks are closed. Often, with his pay in his pocket, he will go out Saturday or Sunday night, meet 'the boys,' and before he realizes it he has spent most or all of his money, thereby causing hardship for his family. It is for this purpose that the Postal Savings Banks in this borough are kept open Saturday nights, and I am sure that this opportunity will be seized by working folk."

A strenuous overland journey has recently been completed by Mrs. Sarah Conner and her four small children, who after a trip in a dilapidated buggy of 900 miles have arrived at Wheeler, S. D., their destination. Mrs. Conner and her children commenced their journey at Moose Jaw, Canada, following the death of her husband, who left them in a destitute condition. Their nearest relative resided at Wheeler, in South Dakota. A span of ponies were hitched to a single-seated top buggy which contained the mother and her four children, one a girl of 11, a boy of 9, a girl of 7 and a baby of 18 months. In the old buggy were piled the worldly possessions of the family. The journey required six weeks' time. Some days they were unable to travel more than fifteen miles. The two older children and part of the time three of them walked while the mother drove. The ponies had only such grazing as they could find along the road and were without grain the entire trip. They were nearly exhausted at the end of the journey.

The Jamaica N. Y. Troop of the Boy Scouts of America just held its first meeting of the fall and it has outlined a very busy season. This troop is one of the most progressive of several out on Long Island, and the boys are doing good work. There are no first class scouts as yet, but there are about ten second class scouts and forty tenderfoots, with a total enrollment of fifty. In the general organization the troop has six patrols and now another one is forming. The scouts are eagerly awaiting their activities and are showing great enthusiasm in scout work. They have organized a wireless telegraph corps and have secured permission to establish a station at the headquarters on Flushing avenue, and expect to have it ready in a short time. A bicycle corps of twenty members and a signal corps have also been formed. There is also an ambulance corps, under the direction of Dr. R. S. Riley. The boys are building a shop, in which they will build a number of boats for their next summer's camp.

THE BOY TEAMSTER

OR,

THE YOUNG HERO OF THE GREAT FLOOD

By PAUL BRADDON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XII. (continued)

But leaving them we return to Paul.

The lad knew that the constable would discover him in a moment or so if he remained where he was.

He thought of a hiding-place. The miser's house was just out of sight down the bank. Lifting the bag containing the treasure on his shoulder Paul stole down to the water-side and entered the house which had been cast up there.

The flood had begun to subside and Pardley's house now stood high and dry, grounded in the sand where the waves had cast it.

Paul had no trouble in effecting an entrance.

The lad had entered the house, closed the door, and crossed into an interior room with the bag of money on his back, when all at once he gave a violent start.

He heard footsteps in the house. He knew the sounds could not be made by the constable for he had not entered. The lad was convinced that there must have been some one in the house before him. He turned to retrace his steps when into the doorway he had just passed sprang a terrible looking man with an ugly wound on his temple, and Paul recognized Rickaby the robber.

CHAPTER XIII.

RAY AND MRS. VANTAIN.

While Paul Manville, our young hero, went to bring Pardley's stolen treasure from its hiding-place under the great tree, little anticipating that such a course was destined to lead him into further troubles and dangers, Ray Worrell and Mrs. Vantain, the escaped "patient," late of "Dr. Amherst's Private Asylum," were becoming acquainted at Jake Sneider's, where the course of destiny had brought them together.

From the moment when she first beheld the young girl, who was, like herself, a fugitive because of injustice and wrong, Mrs. Vantain was impressed with the conviction that in the sweet, pale and anxious countenance of Ray she discerned something that was familiar.

This idea grew apace as the lady continued to contemplate Ray.

It was a perception that in the past she had known and loved some one who resembled Ray, or vice-versa.

And yet, though this thought grew into an almost positive conviction, Mrs. Vantain vainly put forth mental efforts to identify the cause of her impression.

The result of mental retrospect to which she had recourse was not satisfactory. The vision of other days she grasped at was not secured.

Thus eluded, Mrs. Vantain turned to the young girl herself for elucidation.

Mrs. Vantain was a lady of refinement and fine sensibilities, and her manner was pleasing and winning.

Ray was easily led into a friendly conversation, and she soon felt at ease with Mrs. Vantain. The circumstances of their meeting and the similarity of their situations was a bond that drew them together and led them on to friendship.

Ray confided in her new friend very trustfully, relating without reserve the simple yet to some degree remarkable story of her adventures.

Mrs. Vantain listened to Ray's narrative with interest and increasing sympathy. The young girl's ingenuous manner, and her touching, though unconscious pathos, when she alluded to her dead mother, was such as to stir the emotion of the listener deeply.

As Ray went on to speak of her mother further, and finally mentioned her maiden name, Mrs. Vantain's face quickly brightened with the light of discovery.

"Ah, my dear child" said she, "now I understand my conviction that your face was like that of a dear girl friend of mine. It is indeed so. Your mother and I were girls together, and always during those happy days stanch friends and inseparable companions."

"Is that indeed so?"

"Yes, and I am very glad that I have made the discovery. Now, Ray, since you are almost friendless and alone, I will be to you a foster-mother. I know Kirk Sanford is a villain utterly unfit to become the arbiter of the destiny of a young girl like yourself, and I am ready to help you resist his power."

"Oh, how can I thank you, Mrs. Vantain."

"Silent gratitude, such as shines in your beautiful eyes, is all the thanks I wish."

"But, Paul—you know Paul is my dear, true friend, and I depend on him."

"He is a brave and noble boy."

"But his step-father, Silas Snedeker, wishes to get rid of him. Indeed, Paul believes, and with reason, too, that his life is in danger through the machinations of Snedeker."

"What is Paul's last name?"

"Manville!"

Mrs. Vantain gave a violent start.

"Manville!" she repeated, and then added:

"Was his mother's name Mercy Manville?"

"Yes."

"I supposed as much."

"And why so?"

"I will tell you. By chance, some time previous to the time when I was spirited away illegally to the asylum by my villainous husband, Ralph Vantain, among his papers I found some documents which gave me the knowledge that there was a fortune going begging in Boston for want of a claimant which was left by the will of a relative to Mrs. Mercy Manville, or her legal heirs."

"Ah, then, since Paul's mother is dead he is the heir to that fortune."

"Yes, my dear. Of course, since Mercy Manville had been the dearest friend of my girlhood, I was interested in all that concerned her, and so I read the papers relating to the fortune carefully, and the facts permanently impressed my mind."

"I suppose now that Snedeker thinks that with Paul out of the way he could come forward as the husband of the heiress and thus claim the inheritance for himself."

"No doubt. And now it seems to me that it may be possible that my villainous husband, Ralph Vantain, and Paul's step-father, Silas Snedeker, may be in collusion, else why the documents in Vantain's hands?"

"I must tell Paul. This will be great news for him. Instead of a poor boy it seems that he is the heir to a fortune."

"Yes."

"I am sure Paul will be pleased."

"Naturally. But in order to outwit his villainous step-father and his confederate, Paul must be wary."

"And he needs some one to help and advise him."

"True, for, after all, Paul is a mere boy."

"I wish some good man who had means to aid Paul in acquiring his inheritance would befriend him."

"And I."

Mrs. Vantain thought a moment, and then she added:

"I think I know one who will, for my sake, stand Paul's friend."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Mr. Pardley, who was years ago my best friend," replied Mrs. Vantain with a sigh.

"Oh, if he only would?"

"I will speak to him about Paul and try to interest him in the lad."

"You are very good."

"The noble lad bravely defended the house against my enemies. Certainly I owe him a debt of gratitude and I shall be glad to pay it."

Ray and the lady conversed further, and finally the young girl understood from what Mrs. Vantain told her that at one time Mr. Pardley was a suitor for her hand, but that she refused him for Ralph Vantain, who had wrecked her life and finally imprisoned her in a mad-house.

In seclusion the lady said with a burst of feminine confidence:

"But now I know I made an unwise choice, and I wish that I had become the wife of Mr. Pardley."

"Perhaps you may yet some day?" suggested Ray, smiling.

The lady smiled in return, but she shook her head doubtfully.

But we must not dwell upon this scene longer. The incidents of our narrative are rapid and exciting, and we must follow them closely.

We return to Mr. Pardley and his searching party of four men from the nearest hamlet who were in quest of the house that had been carried away by the flood.

Without seeing the house which had been cast up under the steep bank because of dense bushes above and below the searching party passed it.

Then they proceeded on to the house of honest Jake Snedeker, the German farmer.

At about this time the men from the asylum who had been driven away by Jake were holding a consultation with Dr. Amherst about their next move.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW PERIL THREATENS.

In the meantime Kirk Sanford and Silas Snedeker, after some discussion relating to the report of the escape of Mrs. Vantain from the keepers of the asylum, determined to go to learn the facts of the affair from Dr. Amherst personally.

The flood having begun to subside now, the passage of the river could be made further north without great difficulty.

Sid Blaksley, being acquainted with the plans of his guardian and Paul's step-father in so far as their purpose was to visit Dr. Amherst, though he was not intrusted with the secret of Snedeker's interest in the escaped woman, asked to accompany them.

Of course, Sanford assented.

Snedeker would have liked to object as his manner indicated, but he said nothing, and a close observer would have concluded that Sanford held a secret power over him.

"I think," said Sanford when, having crossed the Ohio, he and his two companions, Snedeker and Sid Blaksley were approaching the hamlet where Dr. Amherst had secured his patients in the town-hall—"I think it would be well to offer a reward for the woman."

"Perhaps you are right," assented Snedeker. "But I dare not offer the reward myself; my name must not appear in the affair."

"Certainly not."

"Then what do you suggest?"

"That you authorize the doctor to offer a reward in his own name."

"Good."

"You approve of my plan, then?"

"Yes, and I will mention the subject to Dr. Amherst as soon as we arrive at his place."

"I think we shall find him in the village. The water must as yet be too high to permit him to return his patients to the asylum."

Thus conversing, Snedeker and his companions in due time arrived at the hamlet, which was their destination.

Inquiry at the village hotel, to which hostelry they proceeded immediately, gave them the information that Dr. Amherst was yet in town.

They were also told that the enterprising asylum keeper had taken his quarters at the Town Hall, where he had locked up his patients.

To that building the trio proceeded.

There they found the doctor, and he granted them a private interview at once.

It was evident that he was on confidential terms with both of the villains.

Sid Blaksley, a trifle to his disappointment, was excluded from the conference of the three rascals which ensued.

"There's a colored person in the woodpile, dead sure," said Sid, mentally. "Snedeker has got some dangerous secret to conceal, I'll wager."

Evidently young Blaksley had hit upon the actual truth of the affair.

When Snedeker and Sanford arrived, Dr. Amherst was in consultation with the keepers who had returned from Jake Sneider's.

The fellow had caught a glimpse of the lady at the window of the farm-house it appeared, and they had also seen, and one of them recognized Paul.

All this they had reported.

The doctor was pleased to find out where his escaped prisoner was, and he expressed himself as determined to take her back to the asylum by force.

As soon as he found himself alone with Snedeker and Sanford, Dr. Amherst acquainted them with all relating to the escape of Mrs. Vantain that he knew himself.

Then he added:

"And I want to ask you, Mr. Snedeker, if your step-son Paul is visiting at the farm-house of Jake Sneider?"

"No!" exclaimed Snedeker.

"Why do you ask that?" cried Sanford.

"Because my keepers saw Paul Manville at Sneider's house and the boy defied them!"

Snedeker sprang to his feet in excitement as he heard this.

Sanford also arose.

"It must be Ray is with the boy!" he exclaimed.

"No doubt, no doubt," assented Snedeker.

"You do not seem overjoyed at the prospect of getting the boy in your power again," said the lawyer.

"I had hoped that he had met his death—that is to say, that he had been drowned in the flood," replied Snedeker.

"Well, we'll get the missing patient and the young runaway couple back again all at one haul. Come, doctor, get your keepers together, and we'll make a raid on the Dutchman's house. I guess the law is pretty well in our favor, and we have got the power to carry it out."

Thus said Sanford.

"I was just thinking of proceeding to recover my patient as you suggest," assented the doctor.

He was then acquainted with the facts of the flight of Ray and Paul.

In a short time several of the keepers of the asylum were assembled, and these, with the doctor, Sanford and Sid Blaksley, set out for Jake Sneider's farm-house.

For reasons best known to himself, Snedeker declined to accompany the party. But Snedeker duly authorized Sanford to act for him and compel Paul's return.

Sid Blaksley was informed that the whereabouts of Paul and Ray had been discovered.

Sanford hastened to tell his ward of the news, and, of course, the boy was delighted.

Sid Blaksley believed that now his jealous hatred would be satisfied. He hoped to see Paul degraded and punished while he stood by to exult over him and taunt him.

Then, too, he was rejoiced at the prospect of Ray's capture.

"We shall take them by surprise. That's my plan, and I've already made it known to the doctor," said Sanford.

Some preparations were quickly made thereafter, and then the party which was on the road to Sneider's house, separated and approached the house from front and rear.

The asylum doctor and his brutal hirelings were confident that the escape of the poor, persecuted woman whom they meant to drag back to a hopeless captivity was assured.

Sanford was equally confident that he should soon have Ray Worrell and the brave boy who had chivalrously championed her cause against him at his mercy.

Already Sanford was planning his future course regarding his girlish ward and her boy lover, the boy teamster.

But while the enemies of our young hero and heroine were stealing up to surround the farm-house, a scene of deep interest was in progress within the building, and a climax of thrilling interest was working up to be enacted there.

The destiny of Paul and Ray was overshadowed, but fate had not utterly deserted them.

CHAPTER XV.

PAUL BRANDED A THIEF.

As soon as Pardley and the four villagers arrived at Sneider's house the Dutchman was ready to tell the former the good news that Paul Manville had saved his hidden treasure.

In a few words honest Jake acquainted Pardley with the facts—telling Paul's story of his adventure as the boy had related them.

In conclusion, Jake said:

"Dot poy Pauls vos a jewel mitoud flaws. He vas a pply poy, und a good vellers. Yaw, I say me dot, und I pet me your life dot I told the truth."

"The boy is certainly a worthy young person," admitted Pardley, in a conservative way.

(To be continued)

THE CAMPING-OUT CLUB

OR,

NEW YORK BOYS IN THE WILD WOODS

By COL. RALPH FENTON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIV.

IN CAMP AGAIN.

"Ha! The bad ones have run away, and Hector's bullet hurt the Indian. The wood's voices called Hector upon their trail, when he found it hours ago while he was on his way to his kingdom. He followed the marks the bad ones left behind them; many another could not have seen them, but they were plain to him, and so he came to you," said the demented youth, and as he spoke Jack heard his enemies retreating, but they still kept under cover of the trees and bushes, so that had they wished to do so, neither he nor the strange lad of the wilderness could have obtained a shot at them.

"Help me get the bear trap off my leg. It's crushing it. I stepped into it when it was covered by the fallen leaves," said Jack, with a groan.

Hector promptly rendered the entrapped youth the desired assistance, and their united efforts sufficed to release Jack from the iron jaws that held him fast, and he experienced immediate relief, of course.

"Your leg is badly bruised, but your high hunting shoes protected it a good deal. No bones are broken, I think," said Hector, as he examined Jack's leg.

"No; the bones are all right, I'm thankful to say," the other replied, as he placed his weight upon the injured leg and found he could walk around without pain.

"I was out hunting with Old Humbolt. I got separated from him before I walked into the bear trap. We are camped on a lake near here, but I'm lost. Do you think you can find the lake? If we could reach it I could go to our camp all right," he went on.

"Hector knows the lake well. Ah, no one knows it as well as he. Come! Hector will lead you to it," answered the boy of the woods.

He started forward in an easterly course directly, and Jack walked at his side.

"Do you often venture so far into the North Woods alone?" asked Jack, as they proceeded.

"Oh, yes! Hector has been much further north than this. He has seen the villages of the Canadian Indians, and the camps of the white trappers who work for the great fur company of the North. He often comes this way, for it's the way to his kingdom. You didn't know Hector was a king? No one knows it, but he is. Yes, he's king of a land that's all his own."

Jack thought the demented youth was talking at random—that he was giving voice to the hallucination of a disordered mind, and he made no reply.

They proceeded for some distance in silence. Then the boy of the woods paused abruptly. He dropped upon his knees, and bent his ear to the earth. Then he sprang up. There was a crafty look in his dark eyes as he raised the foliage of a great, trailing bush.

"Creep in here and wait. There's someone near. Hector will see who it is, and then come back," said he.

Jack crept under the branches. They fell behind him, and he was so well concealed that he felt secure from discovery by unfriendly eyes.

Hector darted away, and when he was gone, Jack began to fear he might forget to return. But he waited patiently for a little time. Then he heard footsteps. Peering from his leafy cover, he was delighted to see Hector coming. And his satisfaction became complete when he saw that Old Humbolt accompanied the lad.

They came up as Jack emerged from his hiding place, and Old Humbolt exclaimed heartily:

"By powder, boy, I'm glad to find you all safe and sound! I've been lookin' for you. But I didn't go the right way. The sound o' rifle shots finally made me turn in this direction. Hector says you've had a brush with the enemy."

"Yes," answered Jack.

And, in a few words, he related his last exciting and perilous experience.

"The rascal Barbole must have changed his plan about fleeing to the Canadian wilderness. I wonder why? I've an idea there's some deviltry on foot and that he's at the bottom of it. Yes, some motive has made Barbole change his plans, an' it's something we don't even suspect as yet, I'll wager," answered Humbolt.

And his honest countenance was clouded by a troubled look.

"Hector saw a trail in the woods, to the west, that was not made by white men. Six Indians passed that way!" Hector suddenly exclaimed.

"They're the outlawed Injuns of Red Fox's band, I'll wager, and that they'll join their chief and his white friends before long are certain. But come along. Let's make for camp," responded the old hunter.

"Good-by! Hector's way lays southeast. He goes to his kingdom, but he will not stay there all the time. You may see him again. If the wood's voices tell him anything you should know he will come to you. As your camp is on the lake he can find it," said Hector, when they had walked for some distance in silence.

He moved swiftly away, and he was soon lost to the sight of the boy from the city and the veteran woodsman.

"A queer lad, and all wrong in his upper story. I reckon."

on he's dreamin' when he talks of his 'kingdom.' Cracked-brained though he is, he's a great hunter and a dead shot. He's mighty cunnin' in woodcraft too," said Old Humbolt, as Hector disappeared.

"Poor lad, I pity him, and I wonder if he is beyond the power of medical skill, that is to say, I wonder if proper treatment could not cure the mental malady with which he is afflicted."

"I'm afraid not. He's been just as he is now for some years—ever since he appeared as a lone hunter in the North Woods. Where he came from, what his real name is besides Hector no one knows. The first time I saw him he was in Injun dress, but after he got to comin' to the settlements he took to wearing white man's togs," answered Humbolt.

Not long after that, he and Jack came in sight of the camp of the city boys, and they soon reached it.

Jack told his young comrades the story of his adventures of the day, and the two darkies, Jeff Davis and George Washington, listened to his narrative.

"Fo' de Lawd, Mistah Jack, I done got de wuss sickness in my corporosity dat ebber took hold on dis colored gemman since he got religion. I'se got to see a doctor, or I'se bound to climb dem golden stairs. Yes, I reckon I'se got to go right back to the settlement," said Jeff, clasping his hands upon his aldermanic stomach and doubling up while he began to groan, as if he was in great pain.

"Sho! Go long, black trash, you can't fool dis coon. You'se Injun sick, dat's all what's de matter; you'se skeered of dem red niggers, what Mistah Jack done tole about. Yah! Yah! Youse ain't got no sand, you're chicken-hearted, you is, an' you allers was. Why doan' yer have some sand like me. I ain't askeered ob all de Injuns in de woods," said George Washington, tauntingly.

"Huh! You coffee-colored nigger, youse are skeered yerself, but I'se right down sick; 'spect I'se gwine to die 'less I get to a doctor. I'se mighty sorry dat I'se got to go to de settlement, fer I done wish dat I could stay an' lick about fo' dozen ob dem Injuns outen dar boots," answered Jeff.

And the boys all saw that both darkies were almost frightened to death at the news that there was a band of Indians in the woods. Jack had mentioned what Hector had said about finding the trail of the band of redskins.

Jack winked at his comrades significantly, and then he went up to Jeff and shook hands with him as he said in sorrowful tones:

"Good-by, Jeff, if you must go. When we get back to New York I'll tell your wife how brave you were, and how you wanted to stay with us, but you were so sick you couldn't, and that you didn't know the Indians would waylay and kill and scalp you as you were alone going to the settlement. Let all say good-by to poor old Jeff, for we'll never see him again."

Jack put his handkerchief to his eyes and stepped back. The other lads took their cue from him, and they began to crowd around the darky and press his hand, and express their sorrow that he was going to part with them forever.

Jeff's eyes rolled. His knees knocked together, and he was in a state of terror.

"Fo' de lan's sake, I didn't think 'bout dat goin' alone frough de woods. Mistah Jack, dar am a black bottle in

your basket, an' it hab come to ole Jeff dat maybe jiss a swaller or two ob dat good ole stuff, in dat same flask, might be de medicine fer to keep dis coon frum goin' over to dat golden shor'," suggested Jeff, with chattering teeth.

"Help yourself, Jeff," replied Jack, laughing.

The darky did so, and presently he announced gravely:

"Dat good ole stuff done took hold ob de symptoms amazin', an' I'se a heap better already. I guess I'll wait fo' I start fer de settlement, an' see if I doan' git cured up right yere."

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE LAKE IN A STORM.

There was a general laugh at Jeff's expense, and George Washington reared the loudest of any one. Jeff took the mirth of all but the namesake of the immortal George very good-naturedly. But he frowned at the latter, and protuded his huge lips like "a bad nigger," as he said:

"Look yere, Mistah Washington! Down in Ole Virginny, whar I wus riz, when one gemmen done 'sulted anuther, da allers done settled it 'cordin' to de code. Doan' s'pose you low-down yellor coon knows what de code am. It am duelin'—fightin' a duel—dat's what! So youse want to took care."

"We won't have any fighting here. Shut up, both of you, and go and get the wood for the night camp fire," said Jack, imperatively.

The two darkies went off in opposite directions to gather dry fuel, and the boys and Old Humbolt fell to considering their situation seriously.

Presently the veteran hunter remarked: "All things considered, boys, I don't know but it's my duty to guide you back to Mr. Bayard's lumber camp without delay, for I'll not try to conceal from you that there is danger. Gardeau and his companion, reinforced by Red Fox's band of renegade Winnebagoes, may attack us yet."

"I, for one, do not mean to be frightened out of the woods. Let's put the question to a vote of the club. Of course, the majority must rule. If the most of us are in favor of giving up, and going back, without having a single moose hunt or one shot at big game, that settles it, and back we go," said Jack.

"Yes, let's vote on the question!" cried Tom Watson, and several other members of the outing club said about the same.

So a vote was taken.

And there was not a single vote in favor of retreating to the lumber camp.

"Oh, oh!" groaned Jeff, as he came within hearing. "I done wish I had a vote in date yere club."

"You see, friend Humbolt, we are none of us for going back. You won't go and leave us, I'm sure," said Jack, when the vote had been taken.

"Certainly not," answered Old Humbolt. "And it would be too bad for you to leave the North Woods without having a moose hunt, or getting some of the big game you came for, because in two days now, the regular fall hunting season will open, and then, accordin' to the law, we'll be free to hunt the moose and the deer, and I prom-

ise you some rare sport, unless our enemies interfere to spoil it."

"Hurrah for a moose hunt! Only two days to wait now! Why, I wouldn't miss the sport we came to the North Woods for, for all the Indians and white outlaws this side of Hudson Bay!" cried Jack extravagantly in his enthusiasm.

That afternoon, Jack and Tom Watson, who was the particular chum of the former, went out on the lake in one of the canoes.

"I say, Jack," said Tom, when they had fished for some time with great success, "what do you say if we row over to that island away out in the lake. It won't be a hard pull to reach it. The wind is in our favor. The island looks as if it might be a delightful place, and I'm curious to explore it."

"All right," assented Jack.

The lads worked at the paddles with a will, and the canoe was headed for the island.

The gentle wind continued to blow from the shore, which they soon left far behind them.

Ere long, however, the breeze freshened.

"The wind is rising," said Jack. "Perhaps we had better turn back. I don't like the look of the clouds that are coming up in the west."

"Oh, the wind will only help us along. Why, this is grand. We don't have to make much effort with the paddles. We'll soon reach the island," answered Tom Watson, carelessly.

But the wind, increased in violence, came sweeping over the lake. A sudden storm had arisen. Some rain had accompanied the gale. The waves ran high, and soon they began to dash over the canoe.

The lads had to exert themselves to keep the frail craft of bark right side up. The high winds made the waves buffet it. Each moment there was danger the canoe would be swamped.

"It's too late to turn back. We could make no headway against the gale. Paddle for your life, Tom! We must reach the island. It's our only hope now!" cried Jack, as he was drenched by a great wave that broke over the canoe.

"But the wind is sweeping us away to the south of the island," answered Tom, turning a white, alarmed face to his companion.

The waves were now so strong that the paddles were almost wrenched from the boys' grasp, and they found it difficult to direct the course of the canoe. But they exerted themselves manfully to head it for the island. Amid the rush and roar of the waters they were hurried on, until soon they were near the southern end of the island.

But a strong current swept around the southern extremity of the little water-locked land, and the canoe was carried into it.

"Paddle! Paddle with all your strength! If we pass the southern end of the island we are lost! The storm is increasing. The canoe cannot live long in it," Jack cried, as the current dashed the frail craft along.

Desperation seemed to inspire the two lads to make efforts which they would scarcely have been capable of under less perilous circumstances.

For a moment the canoe seemed to stand still, and the

waves broke over it. The little craft was half-filled with water, and it began to settle alarmingly. But the paddles worked with speed, and presently the canoe shot out of the current into the water beyond it, near the shore of the island. There the waves were not so high.

The boys made straight for the shore. It was a gently sloping beach of white sand. At length the canoe grounded, and the lads sank down in the canoe, heedless of the water, quite exhausted.

As soon as they regained their strength, they sprang from the canoe, and drew it up beyond the reach of the waves. Then they looked about them.

Beyond the sandy beach they saw an open woods, between the trees of which the earth was covered with green grass. The island evidently abounded in sylvan dells and shady retreats. The lads rested for a while under the nearest trees, and they watched the storm that continued to rage upon the lake, while the violent wind made the trees sway and moan over their heads.

But little rain fell, however, and the thick foliage above them pretty well sheltered them from it. The water of the lake was everywhere lashed into white-capped billows, and they shuddered as they thought how nearly they had been swept away by the southern end of the island.

In about an hour's time the storm began to abate, and as it subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen, Jack and his companion presently set out to explore the island.

As they proceeded, they saw no signs to indicate that the little patch of land, surrounded by stretches of water four or five miles across on every side, was inhabited by man.

But, all at once, a beautiful young deer started up out of a cover ahead of them, and they saw with surprise that the animal had a collar about its neck. This was made of leather, and upon it there was an iron ring. The deer did not seem much alarmed. He trotted slowly away, pausing now and then, to glance curiously at the intruders, as if he was half a mind to wait for them to come up.

"A tame deer sure enough! This looks as though someone dwelt upon the island," said Jack.

"So it does. I propose that we follow the deer. It may lead us to the dwelling of its master," suggested Tom.

Then they went on after the deer, and in a short time they came in sight of a rude cabin, but they saw no one about it. The door of the cabin closed, and no sound came from within it. Jack went to the cabin door, and opened it.

Instantly he started back with an exclamation of surprise.

CHAPTER XVI.

HECTOR'S STRATAGEM.

"What is it, Jack?" cried Tom Watson as his companion recoiled from the door of the lone cabin on the island.

"See for yourself. There's been bad work here. There's been fighting and bloodshed!" exclaimed Jack, pointing through the open portal, while the tame deer stood at some distance, looking as if it wished to approach the cabin but feared to do so on account of the presence of the two lads.

(To be continued)

Wild West Weekly

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1911.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

It has just been discovered that bullets of pure gold were used by the Yaqui Indians in the recent Mexican revolution. In Mazatlan hospitals golden bullets were frequently extracted from wounded soldiers.

The new wireless station at Nome, Alaska, has just been put into commission by the Signal Corps. With the completion of the new plant at Nulatto the circuit from Fort Egbert on the Canadian border to Nome will be completed. This will form a new wireless and telegraphic circuit from Nome through Vancouver to the United States. Alaska, through the Army and Navy wireless circuits, is now almost completely covered by a wireless system.

A durable pair of trousers, a stout picket fence and a muscular policeman probably saved the life of Clarence Peck, a salesman of 206 Java street, Brooklyn, the other day. According to the police, Peck made a commotion on Riverdale avenue, Yonkers, N. Y., and fled before Patrolman McCue. After running through a vacant lot the Brooklynite tried to vault a high picket fence bordering a cut along the main line of the New York Central Railroad. He failed to clear it, and when the officer reached the scene Peck was impaled by his pants on the pickets. Had he leaped over the fence he would have fallen 17 feet to the bottom of the cut and on one of the four lines of track.

Emile Van Baelen, a Belgian rubber merchant and lord absolute over Congo plantations inhabited by 10,000 natives, who has just arrived on the Red Star Liner Vaderland, said that two years ago he fell into the hands of cannibals in an unexplored part of the African interior. "Here," said I to myself, 'the white man's brains must conquer,' " Mr. Van Baelen went on. "Boldly facing them, I told them I was a god and would inflict instant death upon them unless they recognized my divinity. They fell to the ground and worshiped me. During the three days I spent with them I demonstrated my power by such simple tricks as lighting a match, or lifting rocks by means of a lever. They were astounded, for they had never seen such things." He eventually escaped with his servants.

Saying that he was ill when he came home late the other evening, and that he did not care for supper, Herbert J. Sleytin, an old cigarmaker, who lived with Paul Heimer, No. 3,408 Park avenue, New York, called for a lamp and crept up to his bed in the attic. About an hour later the owner of the house was summoned to the front door by a loud banging. "Your house is on fire," shouted an excited neighbor. Mr. Heimer rushed into the street and saw smoke and flames issuing from the roof just above the small room occupied by the cigarmaker. Policeman Cronin, of Morrisania station, coming up, turned in the alarm. Fireman Robinson and Hoffsinger, of Hook and Ladder 32, hurried up to the room and found the old man lying in a bed of fire. The blaze was easily extinguished, but the cigarmaker was dead.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Mother—What? Going to marry that fellow Ginsling? He's a bartender." Daughter—Huh; You needn't talk Your only son tends a soda fountain in a prohibition town."

"America is not deficient in patriotism nor in love of art," said the cheery citizen. "No," replied Miss Cayenne. "But just the same, the general eagerness to possess \$20 bills is not due entirely to the fact that George Washington's picture is on them."

"I am an actor out of work. Can you give me employment on your farm?" "I can. But a day on a farm is no twenty-minute sketch." "I understand that." "All right. Yonder is your room. When you hear a horn toot about 4 a. m. that's your cue."

"I'm sorry, my dear, but the potatoes are cold, and the steak is burned to a crisp. The butter has been on the table so long that it has gone to oil, and the hot weather has soured the milk." "That's all right, my dear, we won out in the eighth inning," he replied.

"Well, Binks, I see you've returned from your thousand-mile tour in New England," said Bjones. "Yep," said Binks. "How did you find the hotels en route?" asked Bjones. "Hotels?" retorted Binks. "We didn't stop at any hotels. We passed all our nights in the county jails."

"I understand you suggested that the tramp who fell off your front porch should be taken to St. Timothy's Hospital." "Yes, the hospital management has been after me for months to contribute something to help their work along, and I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to contribute a patient."

The late Sydney Mudd, of Maryland, was on a train going from Washington to his home, when a man who had had too much to drink sat down beside him. The passenger blinked at Mudd for a moment. Then he lurched over and asked: "Shay, whash your name?" "My name is Mudd," he replied. Said the other: "You got nothin' on me. My name's Dennis."

THE COLLECTOR'S STORY

By Paul Braddon

Yes, sir! I've been traveling on the road, selling goods, for well-nigh twenty-five years, and when I'm off the road, and business is slow in town, the firm just starts me off on the road hunting up bills. I'm down here now on such a trip. Hope I'll have better luck than I had last year in this country.

The train won't be due for some little while yet, and as the story is not a very long one, I'll just give it to you.

To carry my money I was compelled to use a valise to hold the dollars that I collected. Every man, woman and child in the country looked with envious eyes at my valise, as though they coveted its contents.

This naturally caused me much anxiety, particularly as the country was infested with tramps, and many bold acts of robbery had been perpetrated.

I took the precaution not only to be well armed, but took the trouble also to let that fact be extensively known by occasionally displaying the shining barrel of a revolver whenever I saw persons loitering around whose presence did not inspire me with confidence.

Of course, while my duties confined me to the large towns, and my traveling was done exclusively by rail, I was comparatively safe, but there were places where we sold goods which the railroads did not reach, and to gain which I was compelled to hire a wagon.

When I reached these sections it was my practice to engage a wagon to be used through the entire circuit, and to be left at the end of my journey in the care of a hotel-keeper until the owner sent for it.

Of course, on these occasions I traveled alone, and the long miles I was compelled to travel through dense and dreary woods, over country roads but little frequented, and affording safe lurking places for persons bent on deeds of violence and crime, naturally filled my mind with apprehension of bodily harm, and made me eagerly scan the face of every honest person I met, in the expectation that he might prove a robber in disguise.

However, in making these trips, I endeavored to regulate my hours so that I traveled over these sections of country during the daytime, and for years nothing occurred.

This prolonged period of safety from attack not only inspired me with renewed confidence, but, I am free to confess, induced me to relax those rules for traveling which for so many years had proved my safeguard.

One day in June I was engaged in what I call my wagon circuit.

I had collected considerable money, and as usual the percentage of dollars in my valise was uncommonly large.

I had finished my business in the little village of Elk about the middle of the afternoon, and was about starting for the next village in the circuit, when the rumbling of distant thunder surprised and startled me.

A heavy storm was approaching, and I knew from the dense black clouds that rolled towards the village that it would prove more than one of ordinary fierceness.

Reluctantly I led my horse back to the barn, for although I was anxious to reach the next village before nightfall, I

knew that to attempt it in such a storm might be attended with disastrous results.

The rain soon began to fall, first in large drops and soon in sheets that were borne on the arms of a furious gale.

The lightning darted hither and thither, and hissed like venomous snakes as it fairly flashed in our faces, while the thunder shook the very earth with the power of its reverberations.

The storm was long continued, and the day wore away and night had enveloped the earth before the clouds began to scatter.

When the moon peeped through the parted clouds, and the little stars began to twinkle overhead, the atmosphere became so refreshing from the effects of the storm, that in violation of my long-established practice, I determined to travel that night.

My horse, still somewhat nervous from the effects of the storm, started off at a lively gait, and when I struck the road that led through the woods he was traveling at such a pace that I deemed it prudent, out of regard for my neck, to check his speed.

It turned out to be a charming night, and as the silvery light of the moon penetrated through the trees, it gave the country such a magnificent appearance that I mentally resolved thereafter during the summer months, when the moon was high in the heavens, to travel only in the cool hours of the night.

Whatever romantic feelings possessed me, they were doomed soon to be dispelled.

I was pursuing my way through the woods, utterly oblivious of everything except the beauty of Nature, when my horse gave a shrill cry and shied so suddenly, that but for a rapid movement of my arms that checked him, my story and my life would have ended then and there.

Scarcely had the animal regained the centre of the road when a man dashed from the dense thickets that skirted the road and seized him by the head.

I instantly realized my position, and quicker than lightning I gripped the whip and plied it heavily on the animal's hide with one hand, while I firmly held him to the road with the other.

He tore forward, dragging the desperate robber, for fear during a temporary lull in the speed of the horse the fellow might use his pistol upon me, which by the light of the moon I saw glistening in his hand.

If I only had an opportunity of drawing my own pistol, I could have put daylight through him in an instant.

While this struggle between my horse and the fellow was proceeding, a new peril developed itself elsewhere, which in the surprise of the attack had escaped my notice.

Two of the companions of the fellow who had attempted to stop my horse were following rapidly and gained so markedly that I was not surprised when they began to climb into the rear of my wagon.

Seizing my whip by the lash I jumped to my feet to make a determined struggle for my life and property.

Turning suddenly I dealt the nearest one a blow upon his head that made the very woods echo, and compelled him to drop off behind with oaths that even in that desperate moment made my blood fairly curdle.

So far from intimidating his companion, it seemed to enrage him, and drawing his pistol, he made a determined

effort to enter the wagon, my brave little horse the while, as if understanding the nature of the attack, dashing along as fast as the efforts of the robber to check him would permit, and making violent efforts to trample him under his feet.

Again I turned and dealt the second fellow a stunning blow that compelled him to release his grip on the wagon, and when I had done so I began to realize the fact that a final effort must be made to shake off the fellow in front, or my doom was inevitably sealed.

To him, then, I devoted my whole energies.

Grasping the reins of my brave little horse firmly with my left hand, I plied the whip upon his back with all the power until it seemed to me that the blood actually followed each blow.

Suffering intensely from the pain thus occasioned, he jumped frantically forward like a wild horse on the prairie.

The ruffian saw my purpose, and in turn made almost superhuman efforts to check my horse.

The struggle was a terrible one. The fellow would be torn from his feet and dragged along. Anon he would regain his position and almost throw the little animal upon its haunches.

The two desperadoes in the rear followed on as rapidly as their dazed condition would permit, and occasionally firing a shot at me by way of a gentle reminder that they were in the rear.

The struggle was a long and desperate one.

I continued to lash my horse, and the fellow continued to hang on and struggle to check him.

It was a question of endurance, and in such a case the animal must prove the victor. I saw that each effort the fellow made appeared to have less effect upon the horse than the preceding one, and thus encouraged, I called upon my noble little animal for one more gallant effort.

And nobly he responded. He seemed fairly to jump through the air.

The ruffian's strength was exhausted, and he could do no more.

Instead of longer being the oppressor, he was really at my mercy.

It was now in vain that he attempted to regain his feet, and he was being actually dragged along, clinging the while to the bridle in his efforts to save himself from death.

His grasp weakened, his strength was gone, he let go, and in a moment he was under the horse's hoofs, his skull was cleft, and his bruised body passed under the wheels and was lost in the darkness.

I now drew my revolver and returned the fire with which the two fellows in the rear had entertained me.

If ever they had any intention of pursuing me further, after they saw the mangled and lifeless body of their companion, those pistol shots settled it. I saw nothing further of them.

We found the dead body of the ruffian, but no trace of his companions was ever after found.

My adventure had one effect, however, to make me return once again and forever to my practice never to travel at night when I am out on my collecting trips.

THE PEDDLER'S RUSE

By D. W. Stevens

About three companies of my regiment were stationed a few miles from the boundary that divides Canada from the United States, and we had been sent there at the request of a number of settlers, who had suffered great damage from a gang of horse and cattle thieves.

Our expected arrival had been kept quite secret, and the very night we arrived there we had the satisfaction of trapping seven or eight of these thieves; but four of the gang, among whom was the leader, showed fight, and managed to escape us, and were supposed to have concealed themselves in the intricacies of a large wood.

We searched it, as we thought, thoroughly, but could discover no traces of them, and the chief of the police offered one hundred dollars' reward for such information as would lead to their apprehension.

This brought into our camp, two days after, an old Yankee peddler, grizzled and white-haired with age, who said that he was coming through the wood, taking his course by the compass for the sake of shortening the journey, he had entered a part that was so overgrown with trees that he had found great difficulty in forcing his way through, but having at last succeeded, he found himself on the banks of a small lake, so shallow that it could be easily waded, and that on an islet in it he had seen three or four men emerge from a dilapidated shanty, and from the description he had since seen he had not the slightest doubt that they were the parties for whom the reward was offered.

Of course, this intelligence produced great excitement, and the old man was feasted to his heart's content, and at the sight of twenty dollars as earnest money he volunteered to guide us.

Well, we set out, and in about three hours reached the spot, and found, as far as description went, that the old peddler was right. We saw the islet, and also the half brokendown shanty upon it, but could see no trace of any men.

However, as the water seemed shallow enough, we plunged in, and for the first fifty yards were not more than half-way up to the knee in water, but then it began to deepen suddenly, and we were first up to our hips, and a second after the water reached our shoulders; and, to make matters worse, when we did reach the islet, we had such a difficulty clambering up the banks, and made so much splashing and noise in doing it, that the thieves, if any had been there, must have taken the alarm.

At last we reached the islet, and then, to our astonishment, our guide was gone.

At the moment we only thought he had landed some place further on, and so pushed on and surrounded the shanty.

Our captain peeped in and said:

"We are in luck's wav, boys; the rascals are asleep. Keep silence, and we shall have them without trouble."

He put his foot to the door of the shanty, and it gave way directly—naturally enough, for the fastening had been

gone long ago, and in we all passed, and saw four men lying on beds of leaves on the floor.

"Seize them!" cried the captain, himself catching one of the sleepers by the throat.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed, dropping the man he had grabbed. "What's this? Hang me if we ain't been sold!"

And sold we most certainly were by that confounded peddler, who had stuffed his ungodly belly as much as he wished, pocketed twenty dollars, and helped us to acquire four old suits of clothes stuffed with leaves.

However, we had our revenge about a month after, for the fellow was caught by the police, and after some further investigation, was discovered to be the chief of the gang himself.

THE WITCH IN THE WELL

"Come, Nanny, do tell us the 'Witch in the Well.'" exclaimed Flo, settling in a great rocker before the fire, and drawing out her crochet.

"Yes, you promised it, and now's a splendid time," said Bob.

"Oh, you children don't never think I've anything more important on hand than to fiddle out stories for you," grunted old Nanny, as she sank into a corner of the huge chimney, knitting in hand. "But it isn't much to refuse, I suppose, so here goes—The Witch in the Well.

"Forty years ago, children, I lived on the Blankfort estate, away across the Blue Ridge. Never was out of old Virginia, honeys.

"There was a great red stone house, children, with gables and porticoes, covered with moss and vines.

"Ah, those were happy days!

"I was fifteen years old then.

"The Blankford family had been scattered for a year, the master and missus traveling in Europe, and Master Dick and Lida at school.

"It was summer when my story occurred, and the Blankfords had all come home.

"Then I was made Miss Lida's maid.

"Everyone called me a beauty; and I was right smart, brighter than I am now, and had long straight black hair. Miss Lida was fond of me, and she would have me with her always.

"Now, you see, honeys, since the family returned, strange things had happened in an old dried-up well on the place.

"The field servants told how as they had seen thin smoke rising from it after dark, and when they puckered up courage enough to peep in, they saw pale lights flickering on the moss-covered stones below.

"Old Wool swore that he heard a hissing and boiling from the place, as he passed at midnight.

"One night, while the servants were up watching, at twelve precisely, the old bucket began to slowly rise.

"At first they all screamed and ran away; but as nothing appeared to them from a distance, they made bold to creep back and peep over the sides.

"There hung the bucket, not six feet below them, and in it stood a terrible old witch, who sparkled all over with light.

"When she saw them, her snaky eyes snapped, and she pulled herself up like lightning.

"Then they all ran away screaming, and while some fell fainting on the grass, others ran to tell the family.

"When the master and missus and Miss Lida, with a crowd of servants after them, reached the well, all was still again; the bucket hung empty at the top, the light and smoke were gone, and everything looked as usual.

"That night Miss Lida talked to me about it, and she said she was determined to unravel the mystery.

"After I blew out the light, and was lying very still, thinking of the transaction, suddenly I saw a pale light shining through the panels of the wall.

"Miss Lida,' whispered I, 'look at the wall, quick.'

"Without a word she touched the floor like a feather, and was over to the panels before I could speak again.

"Before she reached it the light had vanished, and I was hanging on to her, begging of her to go to bed and not meddle with the witchcraft of the Evil One.

"Instead of taking my advice, she told me to light her lamp quickly, and when I had done it, she examined the panels, and tried to shove them every way.

"At last one slid aside, and we saw a narrow passage within.

"Miss Lida looked scared for a minute, then she held the light above her head and gazed in.

"Nanny,' she whispered, 'dress yourself as quick as you can, but leave off your shoes.'

"We did so together, and when Miss Lida motioned me to follow softly, we stepped into the passage, my lady marching ahead with the lamp.

"The passage was hung with cobwebs, and the floor was strewn with broken plastering.

"On we went, without sound, and almost without light, the walk growing narrower, until suddenly we reached a flight of very narrow steep steps.

"Down went Miss Lida, her golden hair shining faintly in the light which she held above it. A damp, earthy smell came up the stairs, which so scared me that I caught my lady's arm, and in a whisper begged her to turn back.

"We reached the bottom, found a damp stone passage which turned to the left, followed it, descended another flight of stairs—these last being of stone—and when about half-way down, heard voices in the distance.

"Miss Lida gave me a look which said, 'Be brave, Nanny.'

"When we reached the bottom, we were in another stone passage, which wound round to the right.

"It was faintly lit, the voices grew louder as we approached, and now we could hear the click, click, click, like as if machinery was working in the distance.

"All of a sudden we turned a corner, and came in view of a door which was unlatched, through which poured a strong light.

"Miss Lida set her lamp on the floor, round the bend of the passage and then crept up to the crack.

"Just then we felt a current of air blowing on us, and turning about, we discovered a hole in the passage-wall.

"We crept to it and looked out, or rather looked up; for only blackness met us until we gazed above, and then we saw a small round spot of light, through which the moon-light shone.

"It is the well! Don't you see the bucket hanging up there?' exclaimed my mistress in an excited whisper.

"Then she crept back to the door and listened.

"Well, to be short, children, there she discovered a gang of villains who were counterfeiting money.

"By their conversation she learned the whole thing; how one had dressed up like an old witch, and daubed himself with phosphorus, so as he would shine at night and scare the servants, who were becoming curious about the well.

"She learned how they had occupied the house when it was empty, before the Blankfords came home, and how they were driven to look for new quarters, and had discovered the secret passage, and there taken up their abode.

"Three minutes sufficed to show Miss Lida the whole thing, and motioning me to follow, she took up her lamp and hurried back.

"In three minutes she had woke up Mr. Blankford, her mammy, and her brother Dick, and told the whole thing in short order; and in less than fifteen minutes Master Dick was galloping into town for a sheriff and men to capture the gang."

"And did they get them?" inquired two of the children at once.

"Every mother's son of them," answered old Nanny. "The constables had been after them for months, and they never would have caught them if it hadn't been for the Witch in the Well."

THE SNAIL INDUSTRY

Snails subsist principally upon a vegetable diet, especially leaves, and at the leading French snail nurseries, the most extensive in the world, the creatures are fed exclusively upon lettuce, cabbage and grass.

That snail raising is a profitable business may be gathered from the fact that the average snail lays about sixty eggs each year. Moreover, they grow with such rapidity that they are ready for the market in six weeks after hatching.

The site selected for a "snailery" is invariably located upon damp soil. There is an enclosure fenced with smoothly planed boards coated with tar and supported as rigidly as possible to withstand the force of the wind. Inasmuch as it is the habit of the snail when it encounters an obstacle in its path to settle down and lay eggs, it is necessary that the wooden fence surrounding the snailery shall extend to a depth of at least eight inches below the surface of the earth, and that it shall be provided at the level of the ground with a sort of shelf or shoulder to further discourage the burrowing propensities of the snails.

Sometimes more than ten thousand snails will be found in a single snailery and that of moderate size.

The months of August and April constitute the best period wherein to stock a snail nursery. The ground is deeply ploughed and the snails are covered with from two to four inches of straw and moss, kept moist by sprinkling. Heat and moisture induce the snails to bury themselves in the ground or to hide in bushes till the breeding season is at hand.

Feeding of the snails in these nurseries is, of course, an important proposition. Their provender must be supplied daily at stated intervals, but, as snails are decidedly nocturnal in their habits, their chief meal, an appetizing

salad-like repast, is served at about sunset. A snail's favorite dish is overripe melon, but this is rarely given them. Care must be taken that no snails eat rose laurel, belladonna or other poisonous plants, as such indiscretions will result in serious illness for the people who eat the snails.

Late in the autumn the snails, grown very fat, retire within their shells and cork themselves up by the process of placing a thin partition over the opening. It is then that the snail raiser removes them from his park and places them on trays or screens, which, in turn, are piled in great storehouses. Here the snails remain for several months without food, or until the winter market causes them to be brought forth.

Snails in the trays are examined one by one. Dead animals are, of course, rejected, and the "corks" or barriers at the entrance to the shells of those alive are removed. Any earth clinging to the shells is brushed off and the snails are treated to a shower bath.

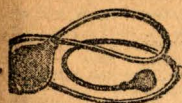
The next step in the process of preparing snails for market is the cooking, which takes place in a great pot capable of holding thousands of the little creatures. As snails must be cooked and shipped the same day, it follows that the snail people are very busy at this time.

After the cooking the snail is removed from the shell and thoroughly dried. After another process of cleaning the snail meat, reduced to a paste, is placed between layers of unsalted butter with a seasoning of parsley. Finally, the snails are packed in boxes containing from fifty to three hundred each.

The French were not the first to undertake the raising of snails for profit. Snail culture received the attention of the Romans at the time of the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey. Even at that time the snails were imprisoned in pens and fattened with a paste composed of flour, boiled wine and other ingredients. In the Middle Ages snail culture was undertaken on a large scale in Switzerland and the Austrian convents, where, during the Lenten fast alone, many thousands of the creatures were eaten each year.

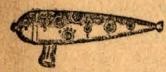
Subterranean animal life presents many curious features. The life of the animals of the caves is unique. The subterranean forms of life develop, reproduce, and die entirely without sunlight. Among such forms of life there is none of the mammal form, except a species of rat; and there is no cave-bird. Then, too, none of the subterranean animals require much nourishment. The greater abundance and variety of this life is met in grottoes with underground rivers. Usually the subterranean life resembles the general types of the country. It has entered the caves and there become acclimated, undergoing curious adaptive modifications. So it happens that we generally find, in modified forms, the life of our own time. In some caverns, however, there seem to be disclosed the remains of an ancient animal life that has everywhere else disappeared from terrestrial rivers, living only in the caverns. The creatures of modern species that have adapted themselves to underground conditions are sharply differentiated from the dwellers in the light. Their skin is of a whitish hue, or else transparent.

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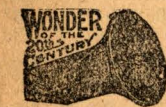
THE GERMAN OCARINO.



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LOOK BACKWARD.



The greatest novelty out. Enjoy yourself! Own one! When placed to the eye, you can see what is taking place in back and front of you at the same time. No need to wish for eyes in the back of your head, as with this article you can observe all that occurs in that direction without even turning your head. How often are you anxious to see faces in back of you or observe who is following without attracting attention by turning around. This instrument does the trick for you. Lots of fun in owning a Seebach Scope. Price, 15c. each, in money or postage stamps. Chas. Unger, 316 Union St., Jersey City, N. J.

THE GREAT FIRE EATER.



A great Sensational Trick of the Day! With the Fire Eater in his possession any person can become a perfect salamander, apparently breathing fire and ejecting thousands of brilliant sparks from his mouth, to the horror and consternation of all beholders. Harmless fun for all times, seasons and places. If you wish to produce a decided sensation in your neighborhood don't fail to procure one. We send the Fire Eater with all the materials, in a handsome box, the cover of which is highly ornamented with illustrations in various colors. Price of all complete only 15c., or 4 boxes for 50c., mailed postpaid; one dozen by express \$1.20.

N. B.—Full printed instructions for performing the trick accompany each box, which also contains sufficient material for giving several exhibitions.

H. F. LANG, 215 Walworth St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS



Something entirely new, consisting of six large cones, each one nearly one inch in height. Upon lighting one of these cones with a match, you see something similar to a 4th of July exhibition of fireworks. Sparks fly in every direction, and as the cone burns down it throws out and is surrounded with what appears to be grass; at the same time a large snake uncoils himself from the burning cone and lazily stretches out in the grass, which at last burns to ashes but the snake remains as a curiosity unharmed. They are not at all dangerous and can be set off in the parlor if placed on some metal surface that will not burn. An ordinary dust pan answers the purpose nicely. Price of the six cones, packed in sawdust, in a strong wooden box, only 10c., 3 boxes for 25c., 1 dozen boxes 75c., sent by mail postpaid.

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This Skull & Crossbones Ring. Oxydized silver finish; flashing red or green eyes. Looks well, wears well and pleases. Draw attention everywhere. Price only 15c. or 2 for 25c.; worth more. Wholesale: 12 for \$1.00. Big seller. W. E. HILLPOT, Frenchtown, N. J.

VENTRILOQUISM—I can teach you to become an expert. Make from \$5.00 to \$10.00 for a 15 minutes' performance. Address, Prof. GARRY, Box 466, Lima, Ohio.

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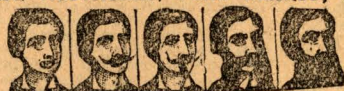
Ventriloquists Double Throat. This roof of mouth; always Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary and imitate birds and beasts of field and forest. **LOADS OF FUN.** Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price only 10 cents, 4 for 25 cents or 12 for 50 cents. **DOUBLE THROAT CO. DEPT. K FRENCHTOWN, N.J.**

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Mustaches 15c. each, 2 for 25c.; full beards and side whiskers, 75c. each. Can be had in five colors—gray, red, dark brown, light brown and black. Name color you want. Postage stamps taken.

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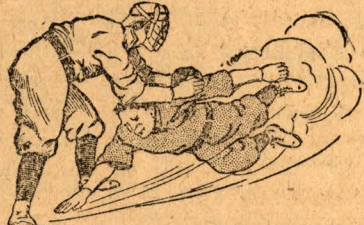
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A brand new game of skill—exciting, fun-making, and fascinating to young and old.

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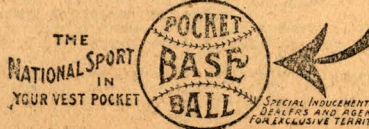
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Put Outs, Assists Strike outs, Runs Base hits, etc.

One or any number can play; or one team may match another. Simple instructions. **BECOME A CHAMPION.** We will arrange to have you or your team matched, if you will issue a challenge.

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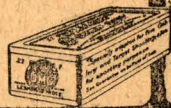
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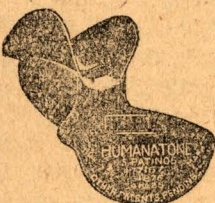
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THE DISAPPEARING CIGAR.



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Gold plated tooth, shape made so that it will fit any tooth. Price, 5c., postpaid.
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By use of this wonderful little microscope you can magnify a drop of stagnant water until you see dozens of crawling insects; is also useful for inspecting grain, pork, linen, and numerous other articles. This little instrument does equally as good work as the best microscopes and is invaluable to the household. Is made of best finished brass; size when closed 1x2 1/4 inches. Price, 30c.

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GET A LOCUST.



Clicks like a telegraph sounder. The best rooster made, for Baseball Games, Meetings, and Sporting Events. Just the thing to make a big noise. So small you can carry it in your vest pocket, but it is as good as a brass band, made of lacquered metal, and stamped to look exactly like a locust. It is as ornamental as it is useful. Suitable for young and old. Price, 12c. each, by mail.

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The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.

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